

Showing Japan's Face

or

Creating Powerful Challengers?

Are NGOs really partners to the government in Japan's foreign aid?

A Thesis

submitted in fulfilment

of the requirement for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Political Science

in the

University of Canterbury

by

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University of Canterbury

2007

Acknowledgement

I first came to Christchurch in 1993 as an exchange student for a year. I never imagined that I would start Ph.D. programme in the same city nine years later.

It has been very long and hard time – but finally I have come to the end of the path. So many people helped me to reach where I stand now. First, my great gratitude goes to Dr. John Henderson who acted as a senior supervisor during this research. His great support, understanding and encouragement always guided me to move forward. Dr. Anne-Marie Brady, who acted as an associate supervisor, also motivated me all the time, and I owe thanks to her too.

I also owe thanks to department administration staffs, Jill, Michelle and Pat, who helped me to go through a large amount of paperwork, which I would have been hopeless without them.

Gratitude also goes to those people who gave a huge amount of effort to polish up my English, which is not my first language. They were all great assistants - Judith, Rebecca, Vanessa, Paul, James, Lyndon, Jonathan, Richard and Geraldine – but they are also my great friends.

I am also appreciative of friendships from my friends, Selver, James, Chakrit, Bob and Nathan. They have listened to me patiently and lifted me up when I was feeling down. My friends in Japan were often woken up in several mornings by my phone calls because of the time difference but they were very patient and supportive too.

Margaret and Stewart, my old host parents from my exchange student time, have been a great support for me. I owe thanks to them for they looked after me as a part of their family all the time here. They have given me a second home in New Zealand where I can go back to.

Many great thanks go to my parents, Sachiko and Hiroaki, who cared for me so much all the time from Japan. Although we live miles away from each other, they always called me to cheer up. These countless phone calls encouraged me and made me feel that they were with me all the time although their voices were from across the ocean.

Lastly, I send my thanks to my late grandmother, with whom I spent a lot of time when I was little. She always supported me to study abroad which was incredible for a woman in that generation in Japan. She passed away three years ago but she always lives in my heart. I am very happy that I can tell her that I have kept the promise: “I will never give up. I will finish my Ph.D. thesis”.

Abstract

This thesis is exploring interactions of Japanese NGOs to be influential in official foreign aid from outside of the exclusive Japanese decision-making process. Three case studies have been undertaken to examine how Japanese NGOs have developed or adopted various means to exert influence on the government.

Japanese NGOs have emerged as powerful actors in foreign aid under a policy of “Kao no Mieru Enjyo (visible Japanese aid)” in the 1990s following some domestic incidents and an international trend in development. However, the Japanese government has maintained a hostile attitude toward NGOs despite its official claim of regarding NGOs as ‘partners’. The government’s awkward reaction to NGOs comes from Japan’s traditional idea of extreme respect for the government and looking down on citizenry. This traditional political culture of “Kan Son Min Pi (supremacy of bureaucracy)” has dominated Japan and that has made the government hostile to powerful outsiders such as NGOs, which may threaten their supremacy. The exclusive decision-making system, “the Iron Triangle”, has also contributed to distance NGOs from the government. By this means, an atmosphere between NGOs and the government in Japan has been far from ‘partnership’.

Against this hostile environment, Japanese NGOs have developed and adopted interactions to exert influence. Various means have been used by each NGO in accordance with each speciality and operation field. The thesis has focused on three areas of Japan’s foreign aid – development, anti-personnel landmines and environment – and undertaken three case studies. Four NGOs have been analysed – Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC), Japanese Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL), Greenpeace Japan and Friends of the Earth (FoE) Japan. Some NGOs have developed their own interactions and others have been adopted from international partners and authorities. On a whole, they have all crafted these interactions to suit the Japanese political culture.

Among several interactions, building international networks and personal relationships with powerful individuals such as politicians have appeared to be most useful. These two interactions work effectively on Japan’s reactive and highly personalised aspects of politics, which is reactive to external pressure (*Gai-atsu*) and rely heavily on the personality and ability of individual leaders. The case studies reveal that Japanese NGOs have exerted influence effectively by making use of these valuable interactions.

However, Japanese NGOs are at a crossroad because of high turn-over of staff and a focus-shifting in Japan's foreign policy to sending Self-Defence Forces (SDF) overseas. NGOs also need to obtain solid financial source which is getting difficult after a downturn in the Japanese economy. These will be the issues that Japanese NGOs need to tackle soon in order to be true 'partner'.

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List of Abbreviations and Symbols

AAR	Association for Aid and Relief
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AP	Anti-Personnel
APIC	Associstion for Promotion of International Cooperation
AusAID	Australian Government agency for overseas aid programme
CARE	Cooperation for America Relief for Everywhere
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DDR	Domestic Developmetn Related
EPA	Economic Planning Agency
EU	European Union
Exim Bank	Export-Import Bank
FoE	Friends of the Earth
GARIOA	Government Aid and Relief in Occupied Areas Fund
GDP	Gross Demestic Product
GGP	Grant for Grassroots Projects
GNP	Gross National Product
GB	Great Britain
COP	Conference of Parties
GP	Greenpeace
G-7	Group of 7
G-8	Group of 8
ICBL	International Campaign to Ban Landmines
ISD	Initiative for Sustainable Development toward the 21st Century
JANIC	Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation
JACES	Japan Center for a Sustainable Environment and Society
JBIC	Japan Bank for International Cooperation
JOVC	Japan Overseas Volunteer Center
JVC	Japan International Volunteer Center
JCBL	Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines
JEXIM Bank	Japan Export Import Bank
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency

JPF	Japan Platform
JPY	Japanese Yen
LLDC	Least-Less Developing Country
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
MDB	Multilateral Development Bank
MDGs	Millenium Development Goals
MITI	Ministry of International Trade and Industry
METI	Ministry of Electricity, Trade and Industry
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MP	Member of Parliament
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NPO	Non-Profit Organisation
NPS	NGO Project Subsidy
NT	Namtun Dam
NZAID	New Zealand Agency for International Development
OAS	Organisation of American States
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODA-NET	ODA Network
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OECF	Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund
OCTA	Overseas Technical Cooperation Agency
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PARC	Pacific Asia Resource Center
PFOC	People's Forum on Cambodia
PKO	Peace Keeping Operation
PM	Prime Minister
PWL	Peace Winds Japan
SDF	Self Defence Force
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
	United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the Environm
UNGASS	Development
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNWFP	United Nations World Food Programme
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VJA	Visible Japanese Aid
WID	Women in Development
WWF	World Wildlife Fund
\$	Doller

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background to this Study

Japan's Humiliation and Trauma which required NGOs' involvement

Japan's foreign policy has long been criticised by the international community as being 'faceless' or 'check book diplomacy', meaning that Japan has only provided financial assistance, without contributing human resources. Especially after the Cold War when the world began experiencing a number of crises such as violent internal conflicts, Japan's passive participation with regard to the contribution of human resources in international peace making and peace keeping has received severe criticism.

The most prominent example was during the Gulf War of 1991. Instead of contributing military personnel to the multinational force defending Kuwait, Japan provided about a quarter of the war expenditure.¹ By doing so, the Japanese government felt it had fulfilled its obligations with regard to sharing the burdens of the multinational force. However, this turned out to be a most humiliating period for the government. Despite the large amount of financial assistance that Japan provided the US-led coalition force which liberated Kuwait from its Iraqi invaders, the Kuwaiti government expressed no appreciation to Japan for its contribution to the liberation effort. It seemed that recognition of Japan, one of the biggest economic powers and a major monetary funding provider for the war, was neglected by the international

¹ The Japanese government often calls this event the 'Gulf Crisis' instead of the 'Gulf War'. The reason for this name is not known but it is assumed that the government intends to legitimise Japan's financial contribution. By referring to it as a 'crisis' avoids breaching the terms of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution.

community.

This incident has remained a source of severe humiliation for Japan and it is now commonly called the ‘Gulf War trauma’. In the *Diplomatic Bluebook 1991*, an official annual of Japan’s foreign policy, Japan’s contribution to the Gulf War was described in a bitter tone:

Various cooperative efforts made by Japan on the problems arising from the Gulf Crisis, including the large amount of financial contributions, are gaining international praise with the passage of time. However, during the course of the Gulf Crisis when the immediate situation dominated the attention of the international community, there was criticism against Japan’s cooperation being “too little, too late” and that it did not include cooperation making use of its human resources.²

After this humiliating experience, the Japanese government deemed it necessary to highlight Japan’s presence in the international community through not only money but with something else as well. A new foreign aid strategy incorporating Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) arose as a means to boost the visibility of Japan’s presence. Before moving on to discuss its new aid strategy, it is necessary to understand why Japan had not previously made human resource contributions available during international crises when the need for such arose.

Based on this background, the purpose of this thesis is to examine how Japanese NGOs have exerted their influence on Japan’s foreign aid policy in the 1990s from the outside of the exclusive decision-making system. This is an important area of study

² Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Japan. Diplomatic Blue Book: Japan’s Diplomatic Activities, 1991 (Tokyo: MOFA, 1991), 51.

because importance of NGOs at the present is globally understood, however, very few research on Japanese NGOs have been conducted so far (See **Chapter 2** for more detail). Reason for this scarceness will be described in detail later in this thesis but it comes from Japan's unique political culture of *Kan-Son Min-Pi* (Supremacy of bureaucracy), which means the government (*Kan*) makes all decisions and people (*Min*) are only to follow without question. This culture hugely contributes a struggle of Japanese NGOs to obtain access to the decision-making process to exert direct influence and that is why they group for ways to be influential from outside. This thesis deals mainly with this aspect in order to reveal Japan's odd political culture around NGOs and NGOs' challenge and struggle to be "partner" to the government. These problems and objects will be presented in detail for further analysis in this chapter. The following section will study why the Japanese government required NGOs' participation in foreign aid and it will be a solid foundation for further analysis of NGOs' interactions with the government.

Why does Japan not make a "human resources" contribution?

Japan, under its Peace Constitution, may not possess any military force for the settlement of international conflict. The well-known Article 9 of the constitution states Japan's position as follows:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes.

In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air force, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the

state will not be recognised.³

In adhering to this Article, Japan is not supposed to use any military force to settle “international conflicts”.

This obligation stemmed from Japan’s aggression during the Second World War. However, with the change in nature of armed conflict from international to regional and with the increased levels of civilian casualties, Japan started receiving international requests to participate in settling these regional conflicts. Many recent conflicts have been caused not by territorial or ideological desires among states but by religious and ethnic disagreements within existing states. In this context, settling disputes can be interpreted as creating peace among the affected peoples. To facilitate this, Japan, as one of the wealthiest states in the world, has been called upon to help resolve these conflicts.

However, the Japanese Constitution has remained the same, despite these changes in the world situation. Article 9 is often perceived as a ‘sacred precept’, and as one necessary to maintain friendly relations with neighbouring Asian states, all of which have bitter memories of Japan’s past aggression. For this reason, being unable to use military force as a backup in conducting its foreign affairs, a huge amount of financial assistance to other countries in the form of foreign aid has been a major foreign policy tool for maintaining friendly relations. This has been criticised as ‘buying votes’ or ‘check book diplomacy’, but it is undeniable that this has been a major and an influential foreign policy tool for Japan. Japan was the top aid donor state in 1989, followed by the United States. However, despite this level, Japan’s foreign aid policy

³ Setsuko Tsuneoka, ed., “Renunciation of War,” The Constitution of Japan (Tokyo: Kashiwa Syobo, 1993), 28.

has been criticised as being ‘faceless’ nonetheless.

Visible Japanese Aid (VJA)

In order to counter international criticism, the Japanese government adopted a new strategy in 1989. The strategy was later known as, ‘Visible Japanese Aid (VJA)’ or *Kao no Mieru Enjyo* in Japanese, which aims to highlight Japan’s international presence and contribution.⁴ This new aid policy constitutes a major part of Japan’s overall foreign policy with an increased focus on providing personnel. Several actions have been undertaken to support this new policy, such as posting expressions of gratitude from aid recipients on the website of Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Likewise, the official annual report on Japan’s foreign aid, *Japan’s ODA*, frequently includes articles on this topic such as “A Dream Bridge – Grant Aid Project for Construction of the Meghna Gumti Bridge [which was named Japan-Bangladesh Friendship Bridge”⁵, “A Letter of Thanks from a Junior High School Student in Papua New Guinea”⁶, and “Hand-over Ceremony for Adult Literacy School in Keur Moussa, Senegal”.⁷ The annual report in 1995 even had a chart which showed in what form expression of thanks were received for Japan’s official disaster relief activities.⁸ These articles display how sensitive Japan is to receiving appreciation from aid receiving states. The humiliation after the Gulf War seemed to have impacted hugely on the Japanese government.

In addition to the above efforts, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) came to

⁴ Mitsuhiro Saotome, Ambassador for Civil Society in Japan, calls new means in aid to promote Japan’s presence as “visibility of Japanese aid” (MOFA, *Japan’s ODA 2002*: 120). The new strategy in aid is called “Visible Japanese Aid” in order to emphasise it as a new strategy.

⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA), *Japan’s ODA 1995* (Tokyo: Association for Promotion of International Cooperation [APIC]), 21.

⁶ MOFA, *Japan’s ODA, 1996* (Tokyo: APIC, 1997), 83.

⁷ MOFA, *Japan’s ODA 1998* (Tokyo: APIC, 1999), 100.

⁸ MOFA, *Japan’s ODA, 1995* (Tokyo: APIC, 1996), 86.

be recognised by the Japanese government as useful tools for increasing the visibility of Japan's contribution to international aid effort. A number of NGOs already had experience in grassroots operations and had built up good reputations among the local populations in which they worked. The Japanese government has made active engagement with NGOs a part of its new aid strategy, VJA. The NGOs appear to have been used as a 'name-carrier' to highlight Japan's international human resource contribution and to bolster Japan's image as a 'good international citizen'.

This strategy was developed throughout the 1990s and had an unexpected influence on Japan's official aid work during this period. This resulted from the government and NGOs having different viewpoints with regard to how foreign aid should be delivered. The government aimed to strengthen Japan's presence in the international community through its aid policy, while the NGOs emphasised the humanitarian aspects of aid policy and were critical of the focus on infrastructure development rather than on the social and human development in the receiving states. This lack of a humanitarian aspect to its aid was also criticised by the international community as well as the 'faceless' nature of Japan's aid delivery.

These two different viewpoints towards aid policy had a major impact on Japan's foreign aid during the 1990s – not just on foreign aid policy itself, but also in terms of the role of NGOs in aid policy and their relationship with the central government. Some scholars such as Uemura (1995), Takayanaghi (1997, 1998, 2001), Shigetomi (2001), and Hirata (2002 and 2004) have examined these issues. However, the number of studies of Japanese NGOs is far smaller than is the case with Europe, North America and South America. While there have been numerous studies on NGOs in Asia, their

main focus has been on aid receiving states.⁹ What is noticeably lacking in the literature is an examination of how NGOs have interacted engaged in Japan's foreign aid policy-making as outsiders to the traditional decision-making process. Drawing on the above background, this thesis set the following problem statements for further analysis.

1. 2 Problem Statements and Objective of the Study

Problem Statements

The following four problem statements are presented and addressed in this thesis. Firstly, what is the role of Japanese NGOs in delivering Japan's aid policy, especially the 'Visible Japanese Aid (VJA)' strategy of the 1990s? Have Japanese NGOs been outgrowing the bounds of the government's original expectation? Or have they been used merely as supplementary actors in official aid policy as the government originally intended? Answering these questions requires an examination of why the Japanese government needed NGO participation in its aid strategy in the 1990s, which, as described, focused more on highlighting Japan's presence in the international arena. Scholars have posited a number of reasons for this but this thesis pays particular attention to the role of Japanese NGOs in terms of the extent to which they are acting merely as 'name carriers' for the government.

Secondly, what are the actual modes of operation adopted by Japanese NGOs in their attempt to be more influential from outside the established official decision-making process? Are these types of interactions with governments that are unique to Japanese NGOs or are they closer in nature to either Northern/European or Southern/Asian NGOs?¹⁰

⁹ The literatures on NGOs will be examined in detail in Chapter 2.

¹⁰ These terms will be examined in the "Definition of Terms" but Northern/European refers to Western aid-giving states and Southern/Asian refers to aid receiving Asian states.

Some existing research, such as that of Hirata (2002), has analysed the modes of interaction of Japanese NGOs. Most analyses were undertaken from the perspective of defining Japanese NGOs as a unique type of entity. However, NGOs operate and interact individually in each different aid category, and different responses from the government can reasonably be expected in each category. It can be argued that there are nuanced variations in interactions with each NGO in the different aid areas in which they operate. Clark (1997) states as “a paramount factor [in determining NGO behaviours] is the nature of the relationship between the NGO sector and the state. Government policies, practices and even attitudes can have a pivotal influence on the capacity of NGOs to operate and grow.”¹¹ Based upon this assumption, this thesis undertakes a much deeper examination of NGO-government relationships, characterising the different modes of operation of four Japanese NGOs with different target areas. A clear difference in styles of operations by each NGO will be shown in this thesis. Yet, it can be stated here that some NGOs have taken active means such as hosting large public campaigns but some have undertaken quiet means such as private discussions with decision-makers in Japan. The analysis will be crucial in the research field since this aspect of operations of Japanese NGOs has not been studied in the past research.

There is a significant lack of existing research on the influence of the environment in which Japanese NGOs operate. This is significant because knowing the surrounding environment enables the re-definition of Japanese political culture and the measurement of the level of non-governmental aid agency participation, supposedly represented by

¹¹ John Clark, “The State, Popular Participation and the Voluntary Sector,” in NGOs, States and Donors: Too Close for Comfort?, ed. David Hulme and Michael Edwards (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1997), 47.

NGOs, in the decision-making process.¹²

The third problem statement will address the relationship between the government and NGOs in Japan. This relates to the second question in that it is based on the assumption that these NGOs will likely behave differently if their target areas in aid policy are different. Thus, this thesis will analyse each NGO separately and closely to search for nuanced variations in the respective government-NGO relationships.

Fourthly and lastly, this thesis will analyse the future potential of Japanese NGOs, especially after the involvement of the Self Defence Force (SDF) in Japan's foreign aid. That the SDF has been given a part in carrying out Japan's foreign aid activities in conflict affected areas since 2004 represented a drastic change. The annual report of Japanese foreign aid in 2004 stated:

Japan considers that humanitarian assistance and ODA should go hand in hand like "two wheels at both ends of an axle" and is thus providing Iraq with both types of assistance under the Law Concerning the Special Measures on Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance in Iraq such as the dispatch of Self-Defence Forces to Iraq in consideration of the local security situation.¹³

The inclusion of SDF into Japan's official aid activities is still an on-going steaming debate issue including a possible breach of the Constitution. Therefore, analysing this topic solely at too deep a level would take up a whole thesis. Thus, this thesis will

¹² "Citizen participation" here indicates NGO participation since NGOs supposedly represents the voices of citizens.

¹³ MOFA, Japan's ODA White Paper 2004: Accomplishments and Progress of 50 years, 2004 (Tokyo: MOFA, 2005), 127.

examine the impact of SDF inclusion on the future role of NGOs.

In closing, some policy recommendations regarding operational strategies for Japanese NGOs will be provided.

Objectives of the Study of Government-NGO Relations

As it is impossible to cover the whole area relating to Japanese NGOs in this thesis, the following three specific objectives are set for close analysis. The objective will be to present more detailed and narrowed focus of the above problem statements that this thesis will undertake.

1) How far have the government-NGO relations changed since the new foreign aid policy of Japan?

Before the VJA policy, the general recognition of NGOs by the Japanese government was only supplementary to government-led aid activities. In other words, NGOs were purely sub-contractors for the government. However, throughout the 1990s, the government attitude transformed and NGOs were accepted as effective actors worthy of cooperation. This thesis will examine the degree and impact of this change.

2) How do NGOs exercise their influence over aid policy from outside the decision-making process?

Japanese NGOs are hardly able to exert influence directly on the established decision-making process, which only allows for very limited participation from external actors. Instead, Japanese NGOs utilise other unofficial means of exerting influence. Examples which allow NGOs to become influential are the application of public pressure, use of the media, and international support. However, it is not yet clear how these correlate to each other. This thesis will refer to this topic, but only to provide a

basic background as this topic by itself is very broad, and would require a whole thesis itself in order to properly examine it meaningfully.

3) Where does the mode of operation of Japan's NGOs fit with regard existing NGO theories?

Japanese NGOs do not appear to conform to the same model as NGOs from other regions such as Europe, North and South America, and Asia in terms of government-NGO relations. They are not as institutionalised as NGOs in the Western model, nor do they conform with the strict government-NGOs relational framework typical of the Asian model. Morris-Suzuki (1998) referred to the uniqueness of Japanese organisations, which is also applicable to Japanese NGOs, as follows.

The argument was that, although Japan had adopted Western institutional formats, the inner workings of these organisations [factory, the bureaucracy and corporate management hierarchy] were shaped by older indigenous forms of behaviour inherited from the traditional family and rural village.¹⁴

It is important to note again that the focus of this thesis is on the 1990s and beyond. This period witnessed the rise of Japanese NGOs and a fast-changing Japanese aid policy resulting in Visible Japanese Aid (VJA). It is also important to note that previously there was a strong decision-making system in Japan - the so-called "Iron Triangle". This triangular decision-making process was supposedly dissolved and transformed during the 1990s with new participatory actors, such as powerful media players and new companies such as those relating to information technology. But the

¹⁴ Tessa Morris-Suzuki, Re-inventing Japan: Time, Space, Nation, (Armonk: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 174.

“Iron Triangle” was still influential in the 1990s and this impacted on the ways in which Japanese NGOs could exercise influence from outside the system.

1.3 Methodology – Case Study Approach

In order to successfully analyse these three study objectives, the author has adopted the case study approach. Four different Japanese NGOs, which had a definite impact on the Japanese government in the 1990s, are examined.

The majority of NGO research has been conducted via case studies. This is because each NGO has its own unique operational method and impact. Only case studies are able to reveal these characteristics and the surrounding conditions which affect the mode of operation of NGOs, such as social and cultural norms. A holistic and qualitative method of research is required, based on archives, documents and personal communications.

The following four NGOs have been chosen for analysis: the Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC), Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL), and two environmental NGOs, Greenpeace Japan and Friends of the Earth Japan (FoE Japan)¹⁵. These four NGOs were selected because they exerted an influence on Japan’s aid policy in the 1990s. It has been estimated that there were more than 300 NGOs operating in Japan in the 1990s and this number has been growing ever since.¹⁶ However, there were only a few NGOs that actually influenced the government in its aid policy making. As the features of the four chosen NGOs will be analysed and compared in depth in the case studies which follow a brief introduction to each of the four will suffice at this point.

¹⁵ For a detailed description of fieldwork, refer to “Description of Fieldwork” (Appendix 1) at the end of this thesis.

¹⁶ MOFA, Japan’s ODA, 1994 (Tokyo: APIC, 1995), 227.

Some may concern that three NGOs other than JVC are not purely Japanese NGOs but national branches of international NGOs such as International Campaign to Ban Landmines, Greenpeace International and Friends of the Earth International. Although they are indeed Japanese branches but they operate their own activities within a realm of Japanese political culture, which is very different from Western political culture where their head offices operate. In this sense, it is assumed that behaviours of these Japanese branches are strongly influenced by Japanese political culture in order to act effectively within the norm. By this mean, these three NGOs are considered as ‘Japanese’ NGOs, which possess strong characters in modes of operations to be influential¹⁷ in Japanese politics.

There is one prominent Japanese NGO that can be regarded as making the most suitable case for this thesis. The organisation is called Peace Winds Japan (PWJ) and it is one of most powerful and purely Japan-origin NGO specialising in emergency relief. The author has given a thought to this option but decided not to include the organisation as a case in this thesis. There are several reasons but main reasons were the difference in fundraising system and attitude of the organisation. PWJ possess a strong and sustainable financial source which comes from spouse of the director. Possessing solid financial foundation allows PWJ being more independent from the government and more to say, to allow it to be indifference to the government’s control. The Japanese government uses financial subsidy system as one of means to control NGOs’ behaviours (See Chapter 4 for more detail) and that cause ‘tag of war’ interactions between the government and NGOs, which this thesis aims to analyse. The other reason is that a director of PWJ clearly shows that he conducts the organisation in Western way which he learnt at British university. By this mean, PWJ deliberately has

¹⁷ It is an annual donation from large private corporation.

non-Japanese character in its operations and this does not make a common example of Japanese NGO community. For these reasons, the author does not include PWJ as a case but often refer to it in several parts to reveal comparison with other four NGOs.

Detail of each selected four NGOs is appeared in each case study but overall review will be given in the following parts. Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC) is one of largest and strongest development NGOs in Japan and has carried out numerous overseas projects. It is often seen as a model for Japanese NGOs operating in the development field. In the early 1990s, JVC also adopted an advocacy role, bringing up important issues regarding Japan's aid policy.

Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL) focuses on the landmine issue which caught international attention at the Ottawa conference in 1997, which declared a total ban on Anti-Personnel (AP) landmines. Japan has signed the Ottawa Treaty with no reservations but it had to come a long way to achieve this. JCBL operated effectively behind the scenes to encourage ratification. As well as this success, JCBL also raised a numbers of the issues such as the difficulty of maintaining popularity in the topic of Japan's foreign aid policy. This will also be examined in the case study.

Greenpeace (GP) Japan and Friends of the Earth (FoE) Japan are two leading environmental NGOs although both have their origins outside Japan. They have exerted a considerable impact on Japan's environmental policy and have brought several favourable changes to the field of NGOs operation. The most significant outcome of their activities was the introduction of new guidelines for environmental assessment for the Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC) which deals with Yen Loans in Official Development Assistance (ODA).

Three different aid fields - development, landmines and environmental conservation issues - have thus been chosen for the following reasons. Firstly, each field reflects a

different area of interest of the Japanese government. For instance, the government saw environmental issues as valuable for Japan. This is because it could not maintain military power, but could show Japan's contribution to environmental issues. This explains why the government gave much support to environmental NGOs in the 1990s. Hirata (2002) categorised the mode of operation of Japanese NGOs as 'critical cooperation' and 'co-optation'¹⁸. While this is generally correct, it tends to class Japanese NGOs as being one type of entity and risks over-generalisation. In contrast, this thesis focuses on each different aid field and the mode of operations of NGOs in these different fields.

Secondly, each issue comes under a different ODA category. Development comes under the grant scheme, the landmine issue under the special aid scheme and the environmental conservation issue often appears in bilateral loan projects (A detailed explanation of each category will be provided in **Chapter 3**). Each ODA category has different key actors and decision-making processes. Therefore, by analysing a different case in each field, this thesis will make it possible to identify different characteristics of government-NGO relations.

In order to carry out the analysis, several months of intensive fieldwork has been undertaken by the author. As well as interviews and data collection, day-to-day personal interactions were gained through working in NGOs. This is important because Japanese NGOs, due to the competitiveness of their operating environment can be quite secretive and wary of outsiders. They also tend to be cautious because they often handle sensitive data such as interviews with people expressing anti-government sentiments. This intensive fieldwork conducted for this thesis was necessary in order to collect

¹⁸ Keiko Hirata, Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 141.

primary data beyond that produced for public relations purposes.

A further concern is that NGOs may exaggerate their effectiveness in order to gain public support and increased funding. There is a need to go further than simply analysing reports provided by NGOs. The same is also true regarding an over-reliance on governmental resources. For these reasons, the author carried out personal communications in a more informal and relaxed way to learn about the NGOs' actual day-to-day modes of operation.

Apart from the fieldwork, primary data has been collected via post, telephone, fax and email. An exhaustive list of these personal communications can be found in the Bibliography. Those sources which wished to remain anonymous have been marked.

1. 4 Definition of Terms and Concepts (in alphabetical order)

There are numerous terms requiring definition in this thesis, especially as some of these are relatively new terms in this field of study.

Aid policy: Policy concerning aid. Each agencies involved with aid activities possess their own aid policies and strategies. Aid policy in this thesis is defined as “foreign aid policy of the Japanese government to developing countries, through their governments for the purpose of economic development and social welfare.”¹⁹ Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) is a part of this foreign policy.

Development issues: The Japanese government considers ‘development issues’ to relate to the building of the social and economic foundations of a state. These include political institutions, security institutions such as police administrations, and the re-activation of the economy and society through the development of basic

¹⁹ MOFA, “Policy line: ODA Charter,” ODA Charter, 30 June 1992, <www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/index.html> (22 September 2002)

infrastructure and economic infrastructures.²⁰ There is a difference between these two terms with basic infrastructure focussing on ‘hardware’ development, and economic infrastructure focussing on ‘software’. (See p.16 for definition of hardware/ software.)

Foreign aid: Aid itself is defined as “help, especially money, food or other gifts given to people living in difficult conditions²¹” by *Dictionary of Politics and Government*, so Foreign aid means the help from one actor to less fortunate others. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan describes the rationale of Japan’s foreign aid as follows: “these countries are impoverished and are in need of assistance from richer nations, including Japan.”²² Therefore, foreign aid is defined as a process whereby “financial assistance officially flows from a donor state to a recipient state in means of providing grant, loan and technical assistance.” In a case of Japan, its official foreign aid is often referred to as Official Development Assistance (ODA).

Hardware/Software aid: Hardware aid is often used to describe the traditional Japanese aid style involving the provision of physical construction and equipment and is often funded by a huge budget. Software aid, on the other hand, is an aid style that focuses more on developing human resources, building institutions and providing technology and expertise for the social development of the recipient country. These two terms are commonly used, including by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, as follows. Hardware development means implementing visible projects such as infrastructure. Software means supporting invisible projects such as improving human rights.

Humanitarian Assistance: This refers to “help in the form of essential basic food and

²⁰ Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), “JICA’s work toward development,” JICA’s Activities, n.d. <www.jica.go.jp/global/peace/index.html> (27 September 2002).

²¹ P.H. Collin, (2004) Dictionary of Politics and Government, 3rd ed., s.v. “foreign aid.” 8.

²² MOFA, Japan’s ODA 1990, (Tokyo: APIC, 1991), 3.

medicines sent to countries suffering from famine or other disasters”.²³ Other forms of ‘help’ include providing humanitarian assistance to conflict-affected areas for the purpose of Peace Building.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs): There are numerous definitions of this term. NGOs, such as those put forward by the World Bank, the United Nations, and researchers like Nerfin (1971), Clark (1991), Korten (1993), and Cleary (1997) to name but a few. The Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC) defines NGOs as “citizen-based organizations active in international cooperation” which differentiates between NGOs and Non-Profit Organisations (NPOs). In this research, analysis will be undertaken of the government-NGO relations. There is also a separate category of organisations known as NPO, which is often confused with the NGO category, which generally refers to non-profit making organisations working domestically in areas such as hospitals and schools. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) uses the following definition: “NGOs are non-profit, non-governmental organisations working in terms of global issues such as development, economy, human rights, humanitarian, and environment.”²⁴

North/Northern and South/Southern (states, NGOs): In this thesis, North refers to Western aid donor countries and South refers to aid receiving countries and regions. Frequently, South/ Southern also means Asia/ Asian in this thesis. Other areas such as Africa and Latin America are excluded even though they are considered ‘Southern’ because they are beyond the scope of this thesis.

Peace Building: This is a new concept of the Japanese government in its official aid strategy. The Japanese government described the background for this strategy as

²³ Dictionary of Politics and Government, 3rd ed., s.v. “humanitarian assistance” 116.

²⁴ MOFA, “Cooperation with NGOs,” MOFA’s Cooperation, n.d., <www.mofa.go.jp/mofa/gaiko/seisaku/seisaku_4/sei_4f.html> (22 September 2002)

follows: “After a conflict ends, the international community needs to work together to provide recovery and reconstruction aid quickly...To achieve these goals, the gap between emergency humanitarian assistance and development assistance must be bridged.”²⁵ Under this strategy, the Japanese government dispatched the Self-Defence Force (SDF) to Iraq in 2004. According to David Charles-Philippe, this definition reflects Japan’s own ideas in Peace Building: “1) the process of rehabilitation, reconstruction, reconciliation, 2) the creation of the security, political and/or socio-economic mechanisms, 3) an external intervention to assist creating condition conducive to building peace”.²⁶

Quantity and quality of Aid: The “quantity of aid” refers to the amount of aid distribution and “quality of aid” refers to the level of quality as defined by several measurements, such as the contribution to social development and the level of repayment obligation.

Visible Japanese Aid (VJA): Though this term is not officially used in Japan’s annual report on foreign aid, this thesis defines Japan’s new aid strategy in the 1990s, as VJA. This new strategy has aimed to highlight Japan’s active contribution to the international community through aid and other means. It seeks to counter criticism for contributing money but not human resources.

1.5 Chapter Breakdown

Chapter 2 will examine the existing literature on topics related to this thesis such as the role of NGOs and relations between NGOs and governments. The chapter seeks to identify where there is a lack of research, and outline the portion of the field which this

²⁵ MOFA, Japan’s ODA 2001 (Tokyo: APIC 2002), 28.

²⁶ David Charles-Philippe, “Does Peacebuilding Build Peace?” in Approach to Peace Building, ed. Ho-Won Jeong (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 20-21.

thesis will cover.

Chapter 3 will analyse Japan's development assistance from a historical perspective. It will focus on Japan's aid allocation and its results. The chapter will address any existing problems in traditional aid administration that has brought a change in Japan's aid strategy.

Chapter 4 examines relations between NGOs and major aid administrations such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). In this chapter, an analysis and comparison of official interactions and 'unofficial interactions' is undertaken. 'Official interaction' refers to such aspects as official meetings with authorities and NGO representatives attending government meetings to express their opinions. 'Unofficial interactions' refers unofficial talks, personal relationships with authorities and utilising international/domestic networks to create broad pressure to move the government in the directions that the NGOs desire.

Three chapters of case studies, from **Chapter 5** to **Chapter 7**, will follow with **Chapter 5** focusing on the Japanese development NGO, **Chapter 6** focusing on the anti-landmine NGO and **Chapter 7** focusing on two environmental NGOs. In each case the interactions with the government are evaluated to reveal which methods are more influential.

Based on analysis of the three case studies, **Chapter 8** offers an overall observation on Japanese NGOs in terms of 'how have they interacted with the government to make a change in Japan's foreign aid policy'. In this chapter, new findings which have arisen regarding modes of operation of Japanese NGOs will be presented to add to those defined in Chapter 4.

Chapter 9, as a concluding chapter, answers the questions that were posed in Chapter 1. The author will also provide policy recommendations for the future direction

of Japan's aid policy and effective means for government-NGO cooperation in the 'Visible Japanese Aid' scheme.

Chapter 2

Existing Research on Non-Governmental Organisations: Clarifying a Missing Part

2.1 Introduction

There is already a large number of studies on Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), indicating the popularity of this field of study. Existing literature ranges from NGO practitioners' on-the-spot reports to academic analyses of organisations. The early focus was on Western (Northern/European) NGOs, but recently local NGOs in developing countries - frequently called Southern NGOs – have also come under examination. As the field of study evolves, the theory that NGOs are important actors in development has remained unchanged. For example, several significant researchers contributed their articles on NGOs in *Exploring Civil Society: Political and cultural contexts* (2004) and Kalder presents her theory of NGOs' ever-glowing importance in globalisation era.¹ Ulrich Beck (2005) discusses role of civil societies including NGOs in *Power in the Global Age*.² However, they all miss out on Japanese NGOs. Even when they refer to Asian NGOs, Japanese NGOs are excluded.

Major international literatures often overlook Japanese NGOs but there are several works on them. The trouble is that most of them are on-the-spot reports by development and aid practitioners. Despite the fact that Japanese NGOs are becoming more influential in the making of Japan's foreign aid policy, academic examination has been surprisingly scarce. Many prominent studies have been produced on Japan's foreign aid

¹ Kalder, Mary (2004) "Globalization and civil society," Marlies Glasius, David Lewis and Hakan Seckinelgin (ed.) *Exploring Civil Society: Political and cultural contexts*, London: Routledge, pp.191-198.

² See Ulrich, Beck, translated by Kathleen Cross (2005) *Power in the Global Age*, London: Polity.

strategy itself, but only a few of them refer to NGOs³ despite extensive research by Takayanaghi (1996, 1997) and Hirata (2002).

Three reasons for the lack of research on Japanese NGOs are considered in this chapter. Firstly, the history of Japanese NGOs is not as long as that of others, particularly in Western states. Therefore, there are fewer resources to examine. Secondly, Japanese NGOs only began to gain the attention of the domestic media in the early 1990s as a result of their relief activities, such as the 1995 Great Hanshin Earthquake and an oil leak incident from Russian ship in 1997. Prior to this, although Japanese NGOs had been operating their own aid activities, they were seldom in the public eye. The third and final reason is that the study of NGOs has not been recognised as a valid academic topic in Japan until very recently. The Japanese academic circles had not taken much notice of them because they regarded them as ‘amateur’ in aid activities unlike governmental agencies, which were considered as ‘official staff’.

Japan has had a reputation as having a government that provided good welfare services so there was not much necessity for NGOs to grow. However, the protracted economic recession beginning in the 1990s disrupted the welfare system. Non-state actors, including NGOs, emerged to ‘take up the slack’ where government welfare was lacking. A budget cut in Official Development Assistance (ODA), Japan’s official foreign aid, was also included in this recession period, which created a space for NGOs to act as if subcontractors to the government in foreign aid policy.⁴ It was at this time that the Japanese academic circle began to recognise NGOs as crucial actors in Japanese politics; before this they were merely ‘amateurs’. There are several studies

³ Examples are, Sumi (1989), Mainichi Simbun (1990), Igarashi (1990), Kubota (ed.) (1992) Kusano (1993), Kohama (1993), Nishigaki and Shimomura (1993), Shiratori (1994), Shimomura, Nakagawa, and Saito (1999), Watanabe and Miura (2003).

⁴ ODA’s budget increased until the early 2000s but it began decreasing as the Japanese economy struggled to recover.

which recognised NGOs as important such as Rix (1993) and Takamine (1999) but most of them also defined them as ineffective in Japan's political environment despite their importance in Japan's foreign aid practice.⁵

Good information about and analysis of Japanese NGOs are lacking in the existing field of NGO study. This chapter will ascertain what knowledge is missing by reviewing the existing material on NGOs. This will provide the framework for the practical analysis of Japanese NGOs in this thesis. The literature review will address the roles of NGOs, Western NGOs, Southern/Asian NGOs⁶, the Government-NGO relationship in both the West and Asia, and Japanese NGOs.

2.2 Review of Existing Research

Roles of NGOs

The emergence of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) has significantly weakened the dominance of states in the provision of foreign aid over the last few decades. This trend owes much to the advancement of information technology such as fax and email, which became available in the 1990s. On the emergence of NGOs Mathews (1997) has commented as follows:

The most powerful engine of change in the relative decline of states and the rise of nonstate actors is the computer and telecommunications revolution...Widely accessible and affordable technology has broken governments' monopoly on the

⁵ Examples are Alan Rix, Japan's Foreign Aid Challenge, (London: Routledge, 1993), 70, and Dennis T. Yasutomo, The New Multilateralism in Japan's Foreign Policy, (London: St. Martin's Press, 1995), 39.

⁶ Local NGOs in developing states are often called "Southern" in comparison to "Northern NGOs" in developed countries. This thesis set its focus on Japanese NGOs so "Southern" NGOs in the Asian region are often used for comparison. Therefore, these NGOs are called "Southern/Asian NGOs" in this thesis.

collection and management of larger amounts of information and deprived governments of the defence they enjoyed because of it.⁷

This decreasing influence of state governments is also evident in international development and foreign aid studies. Despite continued efforts, states have been unable to resolve the perplexing problems of international development. A view was emerging that huge-budget governmental aid hardly helped those in need. When NGOs emerged as a major force in development they seemed to provide an alternative and ultimate answer for tackling development issues that governments around the world had failed to solve.

Some Western governments and international agencies such as the United Nations are now recognising NGOs as important and effective in grassroots development aid activities. Western governments view them as efficient actors and have started inviting them to conferences and involving them in policy decision making. The importance and impact of NGOs in international development fields have also caught academic attention. Several prominent studies have been produced. Examples include Korten (1991), Clark (1991), Fisher (1993), Edwards and Hulme (1993, 1997) Smillie and Helmich (1993), Smillie (1998) and Van Rooy (1998, 2001), whose works analyse the role of NGOs in development.

Scholars focused on Western NGOs because the vast majority of international aid was provided by Western nations and their NGOs as aid implementers. Foreign aid was used as a strategic tool for both Western and Eastern bloc states to maintain the *status quo* during the Cold War. The Western states provided much aid to these developing states in an effort to stop them from falling under the influence of the Eastern bloc.

⁷ Jessica T. Mathews, "Power Shift", Foreign Affairs 76, no.1 Jan/Feb (1997): 51.

Thus most of aid issues existed between East and West during this period.

However, with the end of the Cold War system and the rise of the North-South issue between developed and developing countries, the nature of NGO activities has changed. Probably the most significant change was the rapid growth of local NGOs in aid receiving countries. Their role has changed from being purely beneficiaries of aid activities by Western states and NGOs to acting as independent development implementers. This change in practice has also affected the nature of NGO study.

Recent NGO studies have analysed this change in depth.⁸ The change also brings new challenges that both Northern/Western NGOs and Southern/Asian NGOs are facing. The former are struggling for their *raison d'être* while the latter face their community gradually being divided into two different social groups, *elites* and *non-elites*, due to NGO activities. Local NGOs' activities in developing countries are considered likely to benefit only elites who run them.⁹ Based on this new change in the study of the role of NGOs, the following section will review the literature on the functions of both Northern/Western and Southern/Asian NGOs.

Role of Northern/Western NGOs

Beginning in the 1980s when NGOs first started gaining academic attention internationally, a number of practitioner-based studies were produced on Western NGOs. Examples include those by Korten (1990), Clark (1991), Smillie and Helmich (1993) and Fisher (1993). Korten gave a general perspective on NGOs in his work and debated the roots of the crisis that human beings were facing at that time. Unlike

⁸ A few researches have been undertaken on this topic. For instance, Barghouthi (1997) examined issues that Southern NGOs have encountered and Smilie (1995) studied problems of Northern NGOs.

⁹ It is common for working for international (Western) NGOs to be popular among these local elites because they would enjoy far better working and living conditions than most people.

existing state-centred common views which often defined states as the major actor in development work, he stated that the leadership for the work must come through voluntary action, which often meant NGOs.¹⁰

The history of Western NGOs has been covered by many studies, such as Smillie's, which focused on NGOs as providers of emergency relief with the support of Christian missionaries. After the two World Wars, and the extensive suffering of civilian populations, NGOs began dealing with some of the causes and consequences of war in affected regions by using development as a new approach and answer for aid providers. This concept of aid has not changed to this day, as the causes of wars and disputes in the post-Cold War era are often rooted in developmental issues such as poverty and insufficient resource delivery.

After the Second World War, most governments were inclined to ignore, or were simply ill equipped, to help the people affected by the war, because of the time and resources required. Instead, NGOs became an alternative which responded to improving development. The strengths of NGOs in development work have often been discussed and they are summarised as follows; pursuing local level or grassroots development, carrying out small-scale projects, adopting an integrated approach and creating a participatory relationship between aid implementers and local populations. These four elements are in direct contrast to the top-down, large-scale governmental aid style, which is most commonly known as Overseas Development Assistance or Official Development Assistance (ODA). Western NGOs, in particular, possess another advantage in their easy access to their central governments. For example, Edwards (2002) states that the "...real strength of Northern NGOs lies in their simultaneous

¹⁰ David Korten, Getting to the 21st Century: Voluntary Action and the Global Agenda, (Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1990), Chapter 11 and 12.

access to grassroots experience in the South, and to decision-makers in the North.”¹¹

Of course, NGOs have also been criticised for their local-level, small-scale style of aid provision. Sheldon (1988) develops controversial arguments regarding the four aspects of NGOs’ activities: First, “small-scale” can merely mean “insignificant”. Second, “politically independent” can mean “powerless” or “disconnected”. Third, “low-cost” can mean “underfinanced” or “poor quality”, and finally, it is said that “innovative” can mean “temporary” or “unsustainable”.¹² Edwards (2002) points out four problems that NGOs were facing: 1) an overall absence of clear strategy, 2) a failure to build strong alliances, 3) a failure to develop credible alternatives to current orthodoxies and 4) the dilemma of relations with donor agencies.¹³

These are valid criticisms but even so, aid activities by NGOs have gained a strong reputation over decades. They are seen as effective and capable of reaching people in need. Up to the present, this recognition has remained as main stream in international development study.

Existing researches such as Korten, identified NGOs as becoming more involved in decision-making processes from the early 1990s. As mentioned earlier, some governments and international organisations began acknowledging NGOs as development actors by inviting them to international decision-making fora, sometimes as observers and sometimes as official delegations. The Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, which was an international conference to discuss the environment and

¹¹ Michael Edwards “Does the doormat influence the boots?: Critical thought on UK NGOs and international advocacy” in Development and Advocacy, ed. Deborah Eade (London: Oxfam Great Britain, 2002), 98.

¹² Annis Sheldon “Can Small-Scale Development Be Large-Scale Policy?” in Direct to the Poor: Grassroots Development in Latin America, ed. Annis, Sheldon and Peter Hakim (Boulder: Lynne Rinner Publisher, 1988), 209.

¹³ Michael Edwards, “Does the doormat influence the boot?: Critical thought on UK NGOs and international advocacy,” in Development and Advocacy, ed. Deborah Eade (London: Oxfam Great Britain, 2002), 101 - 102.

development, is a good example of this. In these fora, NGOs have exercised their influence over policy-making through lobbying, reporting on the issues and mobilising public support.¹⁴ Feres (2000) describes these activities of NGOs in the European Union as follows:

The IGC (Intergovernmental Conference) working group met at least a dozen times, and together with the LC (Liaison Committee of Development NGOs) staff produced various documents, lobbying letters, and position papers and in addition to a policy pamphlet, “Action Plan for World Leaders”, meetings were held with a large number of commission officials, members and officials of the European Parliament.¹⁵

Through these activities, Western NGOs have become ‘representatives’ of those who are in need of aid. As such, NGOs are categorised as citizens in the classic classification used by Nerfin (1986), Korten (1991) and others. It has been said that, “the prince represents governmental power and the maintenance of public order; the merchant symbolises economic power and the production of goods and services; and the citizen stands for people’s power.”¹⁶ Being classified as a “citizen”, NGOs often take the opposite position from that taken by government and big-business. Korten (1991) gives a more detailed description of NGOs. He identifies them as the integration of the peoples’ power to compete and cooperate with state power and the business

¹⁴ Refer to Elizabeth T. Boris and C. Eugene Steuerle, Nonprofits and Government: Collaboration and conflict, (Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 1999) for detailed advocacy activities.

¹⁵ Christian L. Feres “Striving for Influence in a Complex Environment: NGO Advocacy in the European Union,” in New Roles and Relevance: Development NGOs and the Challenge of Change, ed. David Lewis and Tina Wallace (Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 2000), 135 - 136.

¹⁶ Marc Nerfin, Quoted in Thomas G Weiss. NGOs, The UN & Global Governance, (Boulder: Lynne Rinner Publishers, 1996), 19.

sector in order to represent the people's interests.¹⁷ In this context, NGOs are recognised as representatives of an unheard voice, allowing it to be heard. But do they really represent this unheard voice?

The rise of the North-South issue throws into question existing NGO studies that posited Western NGOs as being representatives of the poor. The question arises as to whether that which Western NGOs do for people in developing countries is always what these local people really want. Oxfam Great Britain, an international NGO, has produced several works on this issue. A number of scholars and practitioners have also contributed differing perspectives on the literature. Tegean (1997) for example, argues that development has been perceived as equal to modernisation and to industrialisation “in a nut shell”¹⁸ and that “political issues such as democracy, human rights, and women's rights are luxuries that only the ‘developed’ and ‘civilised’ North can afford.”¹⁹ Barghonthi (1997) states that the “participatory approach” and “training”, which Western NGOs prefer were creating more contradictions than solutions in developing countries. “If huge numbers of people in the South are trained, but the facilities or money necessary to employ them are not available, eventually they will either leave for the North or be unemployed”.²⁰

In light of this North-South issue, which questions whether activities provided by Western NGOs are fully appreciated by the aid beneficiaries, Japanese NGOs are in an interesting position as they fall between the North/West and South/Asia divide. Warrenner (2002) argues the effectiveness of Japanese NGOs' activities compared to

¹⁷ Korten, Chapter 9

¹⁸ Melakou Tegean “Development and Patronage”, in Development and Patronage, ed. Debora Eade (edition) and Melakou Tegean (introduced), (London: Oxfam, 1997), 8

¹⁹ Tegean, 10.

²⁰ Mustafa Barghouthi “North-South relations and the question of aid,” in Development and Patronage, ed. Debora Eade (edition) and Melakou Tegean (introduced) (London: Oxfam Great Britain, 1997), 69

Northern/Western NGOs in terms of North-South and East-West relations.

Japan has been a significant 'other' for the West for a long time...it is believed that despite their [Japanese NGOs] small numbers, there may be something unique in their approach to development...that their position as an 'other' may enable them to offer insights into the work of WNGOs [Western NGOs]that WNGOs may be reluctant to admit.²¹

In Warrenner's work, three advantages of Japanese NGOs over Western NGOs were suggested. First, because of their pacifist nature, Japanese NGOs could build good relationships in areas where Japan did not fight. Second, Japan's non-Western nature made Japanese NGOs' nature more palatable. Third, cultural similarities to aid receiving countries were also seen as advantageous. These were advantages often overlooked in the literature.

Japan also shows interesting characteristics in terms of protecting human rights, one of the most important issues in development at present. Japan stands out among Northern/Western states in this particular area. Although it is a member of the Northern/Western bloc of nations, Japan took an Asian approach to the human rights debate of the early 1990s. Some Asian governments were opposed to the Western concept of 'global human rights' because they were not guaranteeing them to their own people. In order to oppose the concept, some Asian states' leaders have come up with the idea that the Asian human right is the right to live. Japan sided with this Asian

²¹ Deborah J. Warrenner, "Is there a unique contribution of Japanese NGOs to development?", Master's diss., School of Oriental and Asian Studies (SOAS), 2002, <www.japan-uk-ngolink.org/PDFagain/archive/FINALDDccj.pdf> (15 October 2004).

concept by showing passive sign of supporting ‘global’ human rights.²² This is partly why Japan can be seen as a ‘favourable’ aid donor state, since its aid has not been conditional on the protection of global human rights or promotion of ‘good governance’. Japan is more concerned with technically dominated project operations.²³

Southern/ Asian NGOs

The study of NGOs formerly focused mainly on Western NGOs because of their strong presence in developing countries, which were aid beneficiaries. Smillie (1995) comments as follows on the relationship between aid provider and aid receiver NGOs: “Until about 1980, the most prominent non-governmental organisations operating in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and Latin America, were foreign, rather than local”²⁴. However, with the growing desire of aid receiving Southern/Asian NGOs, to represent their own people, quite a few studies have been produced focusing on Southern (Asian) NGOs as sub-contractors to Northern/Western NGOs. Southern/Asian NGOs started purely as aid receivers or sub-contractors but after a decade they are increasingly becoming important partners to Northern/Western NGOs and independent development actors in their own right.

There are also studies focusing on Southern (Asian) NGOs²⁵ such as Eldridge (1989), Carroll (1992), Holmen and Jistrom (1994), Heston (1997), Heyzer and Riker

²² Refer to Fumitaka Furuoka, “Challenges for Japanese Diplomacy After the End of the Cold War,” Contemporary Southeast Asia 24, no.1, (April 2002): 72 - 77.

²³ Liz Makintyer, interview by the author, 3 December 2002.

²⁴ Ian Smillie, Alms Bazaar: Altruism Under Fire: Non-Profit organisations and International Development (London: Intermediate Technology Publications, 1995), 60

²⁵ ‘Southern’ here means NGOs in aid receiving countries and so that involves Asian NGOs as well.

(1997) and Smillie (1998). Overall, these studies discuss the relative advantages Southern/Asian NGOs have over their Northern counterparts such as their closeness to local people and their needs, and understanding their own cultural background which help them to see the roots of problems. Smillie (1995), however, states that the clarity of Southern NGOs was not so different from that of Northern NGOs.²⁶ One point of difference of interest here is that Southern/Asian NGOs are said to have taken a ‘self-help’ approach. The approach is to train people in need to help themselves and ultimately encourage them to solve their problems by themselves. This is different from Northern/Western NGOs which tend to become purely ‘providers’ of aid. Wicramaratch (1987), drawing on his case study in Sri Lanka, concludes local NGOs should encourage ‘self-help’ among local populations which will eventually free them from donor countries.²⁷ This reflects the old saying of Maimonides; “Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.” It is interesting to note that Japan has long taken a ‘self-help’ approach toward aid recipients. Japan has acted in this way based on its own experience moving from aid recipient to major aid donor. However, meanings contained in the term ‘self-help’ are different when the term is used by the Japanese government from when it is used by local NGOs in developing countries (this will be discussed in detail in **Chapter 3**.) Another advantage of Southern/Asian NGOs lies in their closeness to local people and their ability to reflect direct local will in development strategy.

Counter to these advantages of Southern/Asian NGOs operating in developing countries, there is the negative impact of their work. Because working for

²⁶ Smillie, 61. Smillie argues that both North and South have altruism, conscience, fear, service, self-interest and organising imperative in other NGOs.

²⁷ S.P. Wikramarachi, “Overthrowing the Money-Lenders,” in Doing Development: Government, NGOs and the Rural Poor in Asia, ed. Richard Holloway (London: Earthscan Publication, 1987), 82-95.

Northern/Western NGOs is considered to be prestigious, local elites in developing countries often seek to work with them. As they enjoy better working and living conditions because of their NGO work, a divide between these people and others has been created in these societies.

In addition, as aid donors now expect fast and tangible outcomes there is more pressure on Southern (Asian) NGOs to produce immediate results. This is true of both Northern/Western and Southern/Asian NGOs. However, Southern/Asian NGOs have a greater role in aid implementation than Northern/Western NGOs so it has affected them most. This pressure from donors is described as follows:

...many donors have begun to move away from output targets, placing greater emphasis on 'result'...The heightening donor desire for concrete measurables may also serve to diminish some of the fundamental NGO hallmarks: innovation, experimentation, risk-taking. And it could move NGOs away from poorer people and communities where success is more difficult, more expensive and more time-consuming.²⁸

In order to gain the immediate results demanded of their operations, NGOs are pouring much more energy into short-term emergency relief than long-term grassroots development activities.²⁹ Emergency relief is more visible and attention-grabbing in the international media.

²⁸ Ian Smillie and John Hailey, Managing for Change: Leadership, Strategy and Management in Asian NGOs (London: Earthscan Publication, 2001), 38.

²⁹ Smillie, Alms Bazaar: Altruism under fire – non-profit organizations and international development, 129.

NGOs were criticized for not thinking and working strategically – for not seeing their activities in relation to local development processes and ongoing conflicts. NGOs' own evaluations were described as too narrowly linked to immediate results and not sufficiently related to improvements in society and lasting progress for target groups.³⁰

Again, the unheard voice of the poor who suffer prolonged poverty problems risks remaining unheard, owing to the ignorance of aid providers of their plight.

Challenges for Northern and Southern NGOs

The previous sections have outlined the roles of Northern/Western and Southern/Asian NGOs up until now. Their advantages and drawbacks have been discussed as well. In this section, the recent and present challenges facing NGOs will be reviewed.

In addition to the aforementioned donor pressure issue, there are several persistent problems affecting NGOs. Examples include financial difficulties, organisational bureaucratisation, and leadership turnover. Among these issues, two major challenges can be marked. One is that governments are taking over previously distinct NGO roles by using same technical terms and concepts in their official aid strategies. The other is the changing natures of individual NGOs and their own *raison d'être*.

In the 1990s, no longer needing to sustain the Cold War strategy, donor governments started adopting NGOs' terms to characterise their aid strategies such as 'empowerment', 'bottom-up', 'participatory approach' and 'public participation'. This strategy was undertaken in order to make themselves appear to be 'good international

³⁰ John Degenbol-Martinussen and Poul Engberg-Pedersen, Aid: Understanding International Development Cooperation, (London: Zen Books, 2004), 160.

citizens’.

It is questionable whether these terms used by governments mean the same as when used by NGOs. However, it is true that the ‘alternative development paradigm’ provided by NGOs, is not having as big an effect as before because governments seem to be taking over the role of NGOs. Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen (2004) have even argued that there is not much difference between NGOs and official aid agencies such as the United Nations.³¹ It remains unclear however, as to who dominates the official aid agencies so it is too simple just to agree with this claim. However, aside from the change of the global context around NGOs, clear arguments among scholars and practitioners have arisen contending that both Northern/Western and Southern/Asian NGOs are no longer needed or supported as much as they have been previously.

NGO effectiveness has also been questioned. Streeten (1997) argues that NGOs are not as effective as they have claimed, that their advantages of a local-centred approach and aid autonomy may not be as firmly established as previously assumed.³² Clark (1997) casts doubt on NGOs’ own claims of effectiveness stating that, “NGOs may also not live up to the claims made in their literatures.”³³ By doing so, NGOs can make themselves look good in competition for obtaining funding and gaining a good reputation.

Van Rooy (2001) reflects on past Northern NGO activities and concluded that Northern NGOs have already fulfilled their roles in international development and it is

³¹ Degnbol-Martinussen and Engberg-Pedersen, 158 - 160.

³² Paul Streeten, “Nongovernmental Organizations and Development,” in The Role of NGOs: Charity and Empowerment: The Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science, ed. Jude L. Fernando, 554 (November) (1997): 196 - 197.

³³ John Clark, “The State, Popular Participation and the Voluntary Sector,” in NGOs States and Donors: Too Close for Comfort?, ed. David Hulme and Michael Edwards (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1997), 51.

time for them to leave activities to local NGOs. It is a common argument that official aid donors such as states and international organisations have found local Southern NGOs better able to maintain close links with local people and more likely to reach specific beneficiaries.³⁴ Chapman and Fisher (2002) say that, “though Northern NGOs have often provided critical support, they have not been able to engage in mobilising movements and promoting civil society at the grassroots.”³⁵ In other word, Northern NGOs need their Southern counter-parts to carry out their activities effectively. On the other hand, there is a counter-argument that poor people cannot be reached anyway even by local NGOs. Streeten (1997) presents his view thus:

Frequently they do not reach the poor, and hardly ever the poorest. Group members are not keen to include them. Sometimes they reinforce the rules of power elites...they sometimes serve particular interests. It is often hard to identify the poor. The credit programs of NGOs tend to entail high administrative costs; they charge near market interest rates and insist on repayment.³⁶

Northern NGOs are often thought of as implementers of their own societies' values and policies. This is why some aid receiving countries are cautious about foreign NGOs' activities in their countries.³⁷ There is also a criticism that they are “interested in increasing the wealth of their own client group” by exploiting local people and thus

³⁴ These claims were made at earlier stage in NGO study by such as Korten (1990), Clark (1990), JVC (1993) to name a few.

³⁵ Jennifer Chapman and Thomas Fisher, “The effectiveness of NGO campaigning: lessons from practice,” in Development and Advocacy, ed. Debora Eade (London: Oxfam Great Britain 2002), 128.

³⁶ Streeten, “Nongovernmental Organizations and Development”, 196.

³⁷ See Seamus Cleary (1997) for a case of Indonesia.

incurring the suspicion of aid receivers.³⁸ Based on these perceptions, Southern/Asian NGOs are valued because they are ‘operated by locals, with local means and for local people’.

However, Southern/Asian NGOs’ advantage has also been questioned. As has already been stated, there is doubt whether local NGOs are really reaching the poor and the poorest. Carolle (1992) argues the existence of two types of Southern NGOs and identifies the paradox of each. One type of NGO is run by local *elites* but not by the poor people who need assistance. Cleary (1997) points out that the reason members of most Southern NGOs are run by local elites is the demand for English skills.³⁹ Those who possess good English skills are usually from the elites of the local society. A difference between the goals of their activities and target beneficiaries recently emerged as one of the paradoxes. Manji (1997) states: “it is not surprising that NGOs are prone to being driven by the donor’s agenda, when the donor holds the money.”⁴⁰ This is not only the case with Southern NGOs; as Baraghouthi (1997) says, “Northern NGOs are increasingly dependent on their governments for funds, and this in turn has resulted in a clear changing in the politics of these organisations.”⁴¹ Too much dependency on government funding by NGOs is a classic argument for their organisational weakness. On this point, Hulme and Edwards (1997) concludes: “not surprisingly, as NGOs get closer to donors they become more like donors.”⁴²

There is an issue regarding the creation of networks among development NGOs.

³⁸ Seamus Cleary, The Role of NGOs Under Authoritarian Political Systems, (New York: St. Martins Press, 1997), 8.

³⁹ Cleary, 228.

⁴⁰ Firoze Manji, “Collaboration with South: agents of aid or solidarity,” in Development and Patronage, ed. Melakou Tegean and Debora Eade (London: Oxfam Great Britain, 1997), 73.

⁴¹ Mustafa Barghounthi, “North-South relations and the question of aid”, 67.

⁴² David Hulme and Michael Edwards, “NGOs, States and Donors: An Overview”, in NGOs, States and Donors: Too Close for Comfort?, ed. David Hulme and Michael Edwards (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1997), 8.

NGOs have created strong relationships with central authorities, but seem to have failed to build strong networks amongst themselves.⁴³ Competition and rivalry between NGOs for obtaining funding, supporters and legitimacy are obstacles to the creation of good networks. The next section will focus on the fourth issue, NGOs' relations with state governments and major donor agencies.

Government-NGO Relations

With the rise in the importance of NGOs in development and foreign aid work, it may seem that NGOs have come to dominate international development and foreign aid where governments used to be the only major actors. However, as the role of NGOs has increased, governments have retained their strong position as aid financiers and controllers regulating NGOs. This section will study NGOs' relationships with their governments in preparation for the analysis of the case of Japan later in this thesis.

The growth of NGOs in development work has perhaps been beyond governments' expectations. Regarding this point, Clark (1990) notes that official aid agencies were hoping that "the NGO becomes just one of the many sub-contractors engaged in the projects."⁴⁴ But even though NGOs have become unexpectedly powerful, the importance of states' power remains an important in NGO studies, particularly with regard to authority over NGOs and their resources. Grugel (2004) comments that "the end of state-centrism has been exaggerated, the state, especially the Western state, retains considerable powers and resources. This means that transnational activists must take into account the question of state power when designing strategies and responding

⁴³ Michael Edwards, "Does the doormat influence the boot?: Critical thoughts on UK NGOs and international advocacy", in Development and Advocacy, ed. Deborah Eade, (London: Oxfam Great Britain, 2002), 101.

⁴⁴ John Clark, Democratising Development: The role of voluntary organisation, (Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1990), 8.

to opportunities.”⁴⁵

Conversely, an opposite viewpoint based on several case studies holds that the government is not so important for NGO activity. Taylor (1996) argues that the impact of the government is not the only influential factor to define NGO activities:

The government clearly has a significant influence, whether directly as a major funder or indirectly by shaping the environment within which voluntary agencies work. But is the government so dominant an influence that it will outweigh all other external influences as well as the motivations and values that drive these agencies from within?⁴⁶

Despite this line of argument, governments are crucial for NGOs. Firstly, they are the authority which creates the laws and regulations that NGOs are obliged to obey in their operations. Secondly, quite often, they are the ones that provide resources for NGO operations, and one does not bite the hand that feeds.

Government-NGOs Relations in Northern/Western Countries

Acknowledging the importance of Government-NGO relations, Clark (1990) mentions existing tensions in them and concludes as follows: “Tensions between governments and NGOs are not unique to the South, they also arise in the North.”⁴⁷ He also argued that the strategy of NGOs is as follows:

⁴⁵ Jean Grugel, Nicola Piper and Anders Uhlin, State Power and transnational activism, (London: Routledge, 2004), 26.

⁴⁶ Marilyn Taylor, “What are the Key Influences on the Work of Voluntary Agencies?” in Voluntary Agencies: Challenges of Organisation and Management, ed., David Billis and Margaret Harris (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1996), 14.

⁴⁷ John Clark, Democratising Development: The role of voluntary organisations, 64.

Opposing the state would mean using whatever channels are available to frustrate any government plan which is negative for the poor. This may mean organising protests, using the courts to challenge official decisions, joining forces with the political opposition or other popular movements such as trade unions to undermine the government's policies or widespread use of the media and unofficial communication channels.⁴⁸

There is a wide range of NGO tactics in dealing with governments on development, determined by the political conditions in each country. As Riker (1995) states, "grassroots organisations operate within the parameters set by the states".⁴⁹

Traditionally, relations between Northern/Western NGOs and their state governments have been sound.⁵⁰ One good example is the environmental arena in the 1990s. Their relations are good because there are several mutual benefits of this sound relationship. Examples of the benefits include mutual learning, information sharing and securing legitimacy for NGOs and providing accountability for the governments.

Generally speaking, there are three reasons that Northern/Western governments seek cooperation with their NGOs. Firstly, NGOs can reach grassroots populations more effectively than governments can through their official delegations, which are often taken to sites that are already well-prepared. Secondly, their activities are

⁴⁸ Clark, 65.

⁴⁹ James V. Riker, "Contending Perspectives for Interpreting Government-NGO Relations in South and Southeast Asia: Constraints, Challenges and the Search for Common Ground in Rural Development", in Government – NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People-Centred Development, ed., Noyleen Heyzer, James V. Riker and Antonio B. Quizon (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1995), 23.

⁵⁰ See a series of practitioner based papers in Development and Advocacy edited by Debora Eade in 2002, London: Oxfam for more detail. Refer also to Part V 'Advocacy in the North' in Making a difference: NGOs and development in a changing world, edited by Michael Edwards and David Hulme, London: Earthscan.

supposedly cost effective because their works are ‘voluntary’ and not so focused on profit-making. Thirdly, they are organisationally flexible so they can adjust their operations to suit each situation and thus save time and resources.

Earlier in this chapter, it was shown that these claims have been treated with scepticism in a portion of the literature, for instance by authors such as Sheldon (1988) and Streeten (1997). But it is important that governments and international donors ‘believe’ in these three reasons in order that they may continue to cooperate.

According to Takayanaghi (1997), Northern governments’ willingness to cooperate with NGOs first arose in the early 1980s. That is when they adopted so-called ‘new policy agenda’, which considered the social development aspects of their international aid such as “democratisation”, “good governance”, and “participation”.⁵¹ He states that the ideal style of Government-NGO relations should be a “creative tension” in which NGOs were accepted “positively”. A healthy competition between government and NGOs is expected in this environment. Takayanagi studies Canadian NGOs as a case on this issue and has come to the conclusion that NGOs are being weakened, although the share of funding provided by governments and international donors grows. At the same time, governments were seeking cooperation with NGOs owing to their unique mode of operations for implementing better governmental aid strategy.⁵²

The danger of receiving too large a share of funding from official agencies has been widely discussed as a concern for NGOs. Apart from the challenge of organisational survival which was indicated earlier, some researchers insist Northern/Western NGOs are now too dependent on governmental funding within the scheme of partnership,

⁵¹ Akio Takayanaghi “Kaihatsu Enjyo no Atarashii Seisaku Agenda to NGO (A new policy agenda in development assistance and NGOs)”, Heiwa Kenkyu (Peace Studies) 22 (1997): 64.

⁵² Refer to Akio Takayanaghi, Kanada no NGO: Seihu tonu Sozo teki Kincho wo Mezashite (Canadian NGO: Seeking for Creative Tension), (Tokyo: Akashi Syoten, 2001).

which can harm NGOs' independence. Iriye (2002) analyses this problem using the case of the United States where the government has become a main funding source for NGOs but there were two problems which arose. The first was the restrictive nature of government and the second was monitoring by government:

- 1) Numerous bureaucratic rules and restrictions governed the contractual relationship between voluntary associations and the government.
- 2) Governments were interested in monitoring the activities of nongovernmental organisations and in ensuring their accountability...officials in Washington D.C. often sought to co-opt these organisations to promote an officially defined foreign policy agenda.⁵³

To avoid the government control engendered by official financial assistance, some NGOs put much energy into fundraising. If they are independent of governmental funding, much greater freedom in operations can be guaranteed. But there is the issue of NGOs becoming more like private businesses than voluntary agencies if they concentrate too much on fundraising. To avoid this issue, some Northern/Western NGOs, for example, in Great Britain, use a system of a 'matching fund'. This is a system whereby the government funds double the amount of NGOs' self-raised funds. Utilising this system, NGOs can avoid being fully controlled by the government, but can also gain a certain financial stability at the same time.

Government-NGOs Relations in Southern/Asian Countries

⁵³ Akira Iriye, Global Community: The role of international organisations in making of the contemporary world, (California: Berkeley University of California Press, 2002), 110.

While Northern/Western NGOs tend to enjoy close relations with their state governments, Southern/Asian NGOs often struggle with their central governments. Generally speaking, Government-NGO relations in Southern/Asian states are much more tense. This section will focus on the relations in the Asian region as background for the analysis on Japan.

According to the terminology of Riker (1995), governments in Asia show four faces to NGOs. They are cooptation, cooperation, collaboration and coercion. NGOs need to deal with each face.⁵⁴ As NGOs grow to play more political roles, governments place strict control over their activities. For example in Pakistan, the severity of the government was described as follows:

Giving the federal government the authority to amend an NGO's charter, [the government] dismiss its board, freeze its funds and transfer its assets. Most damaging was a proposal that would have prevented NGOs from receiving foreign funds that were not channelled directly through the government.⁵⁵

This hostile atmosphere of the Southern/Asian government towards NGOs is also observed in other research such as that of Fonseca (1995). He states that, "Asian governments' attitudes toward NGOs have been no more than a mix of wary *laissez faire* and repressive tolerance."⁵⁶ Oishi (1995) discusses the Malaysian government's strict control over NGOs and their response using the method of 'Domestic

⁵⁴ James V. Riker, "From Cooptation to Cooperation and Collaboration", in Government-NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People Centred Development, ed., Noeleen Heyzer, James V. Riker and Antonio B. Quizon (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1995), 118 - 120.

⁵⁵ Ian Smillie, and John Hailey, Managing for Change: Leadership, Strategy and Management in Asian NGOs, (London: Earthscan, 2000), 26.

⁵⁶ Chandra de Fonseca, "Challenges and Future Directions for Asian NGOs", in Government-NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People Centred Development, ed. Noeleen Heyzeer, James V. Riker and Antonio B. Quizon, (Houndmills: Macmillan, 1995), 64.

Development Related (DDR) conflicts' scheme.⁵⁷ He concludes that Malaysian NGOs use several methods in this severe environment such as making friends with newspaper journalists to deal with the central government in order to maintain friendly relationships.

Generally, Asian governments have clear guidelines for their relations with NGOs. Shigetomi (2002) analyses 15 governments in terms of their relations with NGOs. He has come to the conclusion that, "since the state by its very nature...regards its own rules as universal and legitimate, it is likely that it will impose restraints on those NGOs which are deemed to be operating outside of these rules."⁵⁸ Bhatt (1995) also notes,

...wherever governments have been supportive of voluntary action, they have always wanted NGOs to act only as implementers of specific development activities. Asian governments have not given any support or encouragement to NGOs to play political roles which try to redefine development paradigms, change government policies or restructure government delivery system.⁵⁹

Cleary (1997) examines several local NGOs to assess the status of Government-NGO relations in Indonesia, South Africa, Sri Lanka and the Philippines, where he considered authoritarian political systems existed. His research found the Indonesian government had controlled their local NGOs so strictly that occasionally

⁵⁷ Miko Oishi, "Conflict Resolution and Development: A case study of domestic development-related conflicts in Malaysia," (Ph.D. diss., University of Bradford, 1995).

⁵⁸ Shinichi Shigetomi, "The States and NGOs: Issues and Analytical Framework", in The State and NGOs: Perspective from Asia, ed. Shinichi Shigetomi (Pasir Panjang: Institute of South East Asian Studies [ISEAS], 2002), 12-13.

⁵⁹ Anhil Bhatt, "Asian NGOs in Development: Their role and impact", in Government-NGO Relations in Asia: Prospects and Challenges for People Centred Development, ed. Noeleen Heyzer, James V. Riker and Antonio B. Quizon (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1995), 82.

they faced the threat of being banned for ‘selling out the country’.⁶⁰ One former NGO worker revealed that a colleague known for her dissenting attitude toward the government was murdered, but the case was never investigated. Her colleagues have softened their stance toward the government following the incident for fear of also being killed if they maintain their attitude of opposition to the government.⁶¹

Having displayed the negative aspects of Government-NGO relations in Asia, it is necessary to now also examine the counter arguments. Broadly speaking, although NGOs find it difficult to deal with governments politically, they can still build friendly relationships at the individual level. A comment was made on this point by the president of one Southern/Asian NGO: “government is only a bureaucratic frame. You can abuse the iron frame, but don’t abuse the people who are working in it...Make sure you understand that it is the systems that are bad, not the people.”⁶² This way of thinking was adopted by some Japanese NGOs which have made significant progress in Japan’s new aid policy which will be analysed in later chapters.

The term ‘partnership’ often comes up when describing supposedly friendly Government-NGO relations. Yet, as Fowler (2000) warns, “distorted language of partnership is a current example of how rhetoric masks major disparities in power and the maintenance of dependency”⁶³. Donors could change the meaning of terms intentionally to suit their own purposes and interests. ‘Partnership’ has frequently been employed in order to make use of NGOs as cost-effective contractors to governments. Furthermore, Northern/Western NGOs sometimes employ the term to utilise

⁶⁰ Cleary, The Role of NGOs Under Authoritarian Political Systems, Chapter 2

⁶¹ Source from anonymous, 12 July 2002.

⁶² A comment by Narayan Hedge of BAIF President, quoted in Managing for Change: Leadership, Strategy and Management in Asian NGOs, ed., Ian Smilie and John Hailey (London: Earthscan, 2001), 30.

⁶³ Alan Fowler, Civil Society, NGOs, and Social Development: Changing the Rules of the Game, (Geneva: United Nations Research Institute for Social Development [UNRISD], 2000), Occasional Paper 1, 5.

Southern/Asian NGOs as local contractors.

Ironically, this strategy could in fact work in favour of these “contractors”. Some Asian NGOs make use of this system to strengthen their positions *vis-à-vis* the governments. Hudock (2002) discusses how Northern/Western NGOs’ reductions in operating budgets and personnel numbers have enabled Southern/Asian NGOs to build their own capacity for self-help and self-sufficiency. This has resulted in gains in strength and organisational maturing.⁶⁴

‘Participatory development’ has also become a ‘trendy’ approach in the development study field in terms of Government-NGO relations in Southern/Asian states. Under this framework, the government actively involves people on the spot for official aid activities in order to ‘hear their voice directly’. One advantage of NGOs over government is their closeness to local people at the grassroots level, making this method their *forte*: “NGOs have proved more successful than government agencies in utilizing participatory methods and have made a significant impact, albeit largely on a local scale.”⁶⁵ Therefore, this method creates opportunities for NGOs and government to cooperate in a positive way by engaging each other at the grassroots level.

There is a danger regarding these approaches that bind NGOs and governments in that aid providers can define what people ‘really need’, using the ‘participatory method’ as a smokescreen to implement what providers really want to achieve via that aid work. In this case, NGOs risk being used as part of the smokescreen as well to prove the ‘transparency’ of the governments’ aid.

⁶⁴ Ann C. Hudock, NGOs and Civil Society: Democracy by proxy?, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), 65.

⁶⁵ John Farrington and David Lewis, Non-Governmental Organisations and the State in Asia: Rethinking roles in sustainable agricultural development, (London: Routledge, 1993), 36.

Japanese NGOs: Clarifying a Missing Part in the Field of Study

The previous sections have displayed that there is a vast volume of research on Northern/Western and Southern/Asian NGOs, which covers a broad range of topics concerning their work. Now it remains to review the case of Japanese NGOs, which have often been overlooked in existing research due to their geographical, cultural and political uniqueness.

When considering the case of Japan in development and foreign aid study, the interesting nature of its stance arises, which was discussed briefly earlier in this chapter. Although Japan as a major aid donor is a member of Northern/Western groups of states, it strongly maintains its Asian nature in the cultural and political environments. Superficially, Japan seems to possess a political system of liberal democracy similar to other Northern/Western states, but what really dominates Japanese politics is the influence of the Asian characteristic of a strong central authority. Therefore, it is debatable whether Japan belongs to the Northern/Western or the Southern/Asian grouping. Geographically and often politically speaking, Japan is undoubtedly an Asian state. However, Japan has certainly not in recent decades been an aid receiving state, a trait which most Southern/Asian states have in common. Is Japan a member of Northern/Western states? It is so by being a major aid donor and a developed country, but its strong Asian nature prevents the defining of Japan as a part of them.

As NGOs' modes of operation are affected by the states and various types of states interact differently with NGOs, establishing whether Japan can more appropriately be defined as a Northern/Western or Southern/Asian state is crucial. This issue, however, is too broad to be resolved only in this section alone. This thesis will explore the interactions of Japanese NGOs with the Japanese government, which will enable this question to be answered. Therefore, this section will review existing works on Japanese

NGOs and clarify where research is lacking in order to learn what is known and what is not known, regarding their operation.

Existing works that examine Northern/Western NGOs rarely mention Japan. Examples are Korten (1991), Smilie (1995), Van Rooy (1998), and Fowler (2000). There are several works in Japanese which examine Japanese NGOs but when it comes to English-language literature, the number is very small.

This small number of works indicates that Japanese NGOs are not perceived as a member of the Northern/Western NGO grouping. On the other hand, Southern/Asian NGO research also excludes Japan because Japan is not an aid recipient and does not share similar issues with the Southern/Asian group. It is clear therefore, that Japan falls through the gap between North/West and South/Asia in the existing literature.

Among the small number of works which examine the case of Japan is the highly influential book by Smilie and Helmich (1999) entitled, *Stakeholders: government-NGO partnerships for international development*. This book, which involves analyses of Government-NGO relations in 23 states, regions and international institutions, has devoted ten pages to Japan. It has written about Japanese NGOs as follows:

Historically, however, beyond the Buddhist tradition of Charity, Japan has a limited tradition of philanthropy, related mainly to the building of temples and private schools for classical and special education. The government has traditionally provided leadership, and has organised the delivery of most social services. A dominant bureaucracy has left a very limited place for non-governmental action.⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Judith Randel, and Tony German "Chapter 14: Japan", in Stakeholders: government-NGO partnership for international development, ed., Ian Smillie and Henny Helmich (London: Earthscan, 1999), 149.

Despite this observation, they concluded that Japan possesses an "...NGO sector that is growing both in size and confidence, and becoming an increasingly significant partner to government in the delivery of development assistance".⁶⁷ Salamon and Anheier (1996), discussing the difficulties facing nongovernmental sectors in Japan, state that, "where government policy has seen little use for nonprofit organizations, such organizations have not been either encouraged or permitted."⁶⁸

As attested to by the above quotations, Japan's Government-NGO relations are not as positive as those of Northern/Western states. Relatively negative appraisals in analyses are present in some other works on this issue. Mathews (1997) points out Japan's hostile atmosphere around NGOs, likening it to China and the Middle East.⁶⁹ Yamamoto (1995) sharply describes the Japanese government's relationship with NGOs:

The government's attitude toward NGOs has been very curt, and this lack of acknowledgement is closely related to the dominant role of the bureaucracy in the governance of Japanese society. There is an underlying assumption among government officials that NGOs are basically unauthorised actors in a society where government is the only authorized organization to promote public interest. Therefore, government bureaucrats could regard NGOs as a potentially disturbing agent, in spite of the favourable appraisal of NGOs in the mass media.⁷⁰

⁶⁷ Randel and German, 149.

⁶⁸ Lester M. Salamon and Helmut K. Anheier, The Emerging Nonprofits Sector: An overview, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 94.

⁶⁹ Jessica T. Mathews, "Power Shift," Foreign Affairs, Jan/Feb, 76, no. 1 (1997), 51

⁷⁰ Tadashi Yamamoto, ed., Emerging Civil Society in the Asia Pacific Community: Nongovernmental Uprisings of the Emerging Asia Pacific Regional Community, a 25th Anniversary Project of Japan Centre for International Exchange (JCIE), (Tokyo: JCIE, 1995), 144.

From his controversial viewpoint Shigetomi (2002) states: “countries like Japan, where political restraints on NGOs are virtually non-existent, but there is far less demand for NGO services than in developing countries.”⁷¹ Having said so, he notes the importance of the NGO sector, which he says could be more effective than governments in replacing some governmental work.⁷² Generally speaking, the overall literature has perceived the Japanese Government-NGO relations as one in which ‘the government has been trying to control NGOs’.

Interestingly, studies undertaken by one government official have presented a very optimistic viewpoint. Saotome (2003), who worked in the NGO section within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA), provides information on NGO cooperation in Japan’s foreign aid strategy and repeatedly emphasises the importance of the partnership between the government and NGOs. The emphasis was placed particularly on the development of governmental efforts to build the partnership with NGOs, but Saotome’s work failed to present any downside to the system.⁷³

In *Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo’s Aid and Development Policy*, a work devoted by Hirata (2002) to Japanese NGOs, the relationship between NGOs and MOFA was categorised into two different forms, ‘critical cooperation’ and ‘co-optation’.⁷⁴ As discussed in **Chapter 1**, Hirata’s conclusion, however, lacked a degree of validity due to her assumption that Government-NGO relations operated identically in the various fields where there was

⁷¹ Shinichi Shigetomi, “The States and NGOs: Issues and Analytical Framework”, The State and NGOs: Perspective from Asia, ed., Shinichi Shigetomi, (Pasir Panjang: ISEAS, 2002), 15.

⁷² Shigetomi, 23.

⁷³ For a full text, see Mitsuhiro Saotome, “Nihon no ODA ni Shimeru NGO/NPO no Yakuwari (Role of NGOs and NPOs in Japan’s ODA)”, Kokusai Mondai (International affairs) 517, (April 2003): 63 - 77.

⁷⁴ Hirata, Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo’s Aid and Development Policy, 141.

cooperation such as reforming official aid policy, development, anti-personnel landmines, and the environment. The result was that she made number of broad generalisations but was unable to draw specific conclusions or ‘nuanced’ relationships in individual areas.

In contrast to the small number of English works, there are quite a few Japanese works on Japanese NGOs. However, most of the works are undertaken by government officials (such as the aforementioned Saotome) and by NGOs themselves, which publish their operational reports as part of their advocacy activities. Examples are Oxfam Japan, Save the Children Japan, the Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC), Mekong Watch, and FoE Japan among others. Some NGO workers have written about their individual activities a well, such as Inagaki (1996), Nishikawa (1991), Kumaoka (1993), and Takahashi (2002) to name a few. Their actual experiences can be valuable for they have witnessed Japanese aid and NGOs from the inside.

Among academic works, Takahashi (2004) has written a report on Japanese NGOs’ activities from an insider’s view, since he is an actual NGO worker as well. However, his report does not go too far beyond providing general information.⁷⁵

Masao Tao has produced a number of works on Japanese voluntary or non-profit making organisations.⁷⁶ His works possess similar perspectives to Japanese NGOs’ analysis in terms of organisational management, but they focus on domestic issues and not on Japan’s foreign aid.

As **Chapter 1** explained, Japan adopted a new aid policy, “Visible Japanese Aid

⁷⁵ Kiyotaka Takahashi, “Chapter 7: Japan”, NGO Sekuta ni Kansuru 6 ka Koku Hikaku Choosa: MDBs no Renkei ni Mukete (Comparative analysis on NGO sectors in 6 states: Toward a cooperation for MDBs), ed., Motoko Mekata (Tokyo: Keizai Sangyo Kenkyujo, 2004), 183 - 215.

⁷⁶ His works include Borantarii Soshiki no Keiei Kanri (Organisational management of voluntary organisations)(1999), NPO to Jigyo (NPO and business sector)(2002), Borantia/NPO no Soshiki-ron (Organisational theory of voluntary organisations and NPO) (2004) and Jissen NPO Manejimento (Practical NPO management)(2004).

(VJA)” in the 1990s in order to highlight Japan’s presence as a ‘good international citizen’ with active NGO involvement in governmental aid activities. But there is almost no existing research on this policy. Therefore, by analysing the interactions of Japanese NGOs with the central government in this 1990s period of “VJA”, it will be possible to make a meaningful contribution to the field of study in an area where there is a significant lack at present. It is also important to examine how they exercise their influence on Japan’s foreign aid because their presence is ever increasing, and there seems to be no turning back the tide.

2.3 Conclusion

Through this overview of existing research on NGOs, some important aspects have become clear in the field of study. Firstly, there was a crucial change in the study of development and foreign aid, following which Southern/Asian NGOs started to receive more attention than Northern/Western ones. This change has highlighted the North-South issue more than ever. Secondly, Japan has often been excluded from existing works despite its importance as a major foreign aid donor and the NGOs’ growing importance in Japan’s aid policy-making process. There are some works in Japanese but most of these are simply ‘on-the-spot’ type reports which lack academic perspective and it is hard to say what contribution has been made by them so far. Thirdly and lastly, almost no research has been undertaken on Japanese NGOs in Japan’s new aid strategy, “Visible Japanese Aid (VJA)”, in the 1990s, under which Japanese NGOs have precipitated some crucial changes in the direction of Japan’s foreign aid.

This third point represents a crucial lack in the literature. Examining the way Japanese NGOs have become influential from outside the established decision-making

process in Japan facilitates a greater understanding of how Japan's new aid strategy operates, which has been overlooked in study thus far. This thesis will focus on this point and reveal the interactions of Japanese NGOs with the Japanese government by using three case studies in **Chapters 5, 6 and 7**. However, before starting the actual case analyses, the following chapter will provide the background to Japan's official aid strategy in order to answer the following questions: What were the existing issues in Japan's aid before the inclusion of NGOs? Why did the Japanese government need active NGO involvement to carry out its new aid strategy?

Chapter 3

The Changing Framework of Japan's Foreign Aid:

From a 'faceless' to 'friendly face'

3.1 Introduction: History of Japan's Official Development Assistance

The introductory chapter briefly discussed how Japan's traditional aid strategy had faced severe international criticism for being "faceless", or in other words 'not fulfilling international requirements for providing a human contribution.' This chapter will focus closely on the changing nature of Japan's Official Development Assistance (ODA) to clarify existing issues and problems. Some of these existing issues contributed to the introduction of a new aid policy framework, the so-called "Visible Japanese Aid (VJA)" in this thesis by cooperating Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). By analysing the new aid policy framework, this chapter will provide the background for the following chapters which examine the NGOs' involvement.

From Aid Recipient to Major Aid Donor...

Although Japan is now a major foreign aid donor, it started as a major aid recipient country immediately after World War Two until 1951. Funding from several international organisations such as the World Bank helped to build Japan's infrastructure, which was necessary for the later economic boom. Japan joined the Colombo Plan, an international aid plan, in 1955. Since then, Japan's own aid policy, known as "Official Development Assistance" (ODA), has grown dramatically from smaller reparation payments to Asian countries in the 1950s to one of the largest aid contributions in the world. Although its budget decreased from 2000, owing to a

prolonged economic recession,¹ it still maintains its position as the second largest aid donor, behind only the United States. Naturally, this prominent position has attracted considerable attention from academics, business people and the public alike.

Many scholars of foreign aid have tried to understand Japan's radical change and growth in the international aid scene and its political implications. Scholars such as Hasegawa (1975), Wright-Neville (1991), Rix (1993), Orr and Koppel (1993), Tarte (1998) and Furuoka (2000), have tried to analyse the nature of Japan's ODA using various models. Rix (1993) analysed Japan's aid donations focusing on its 'giving philosophy', Orr and Koppel (1993) considered Japan's aid relations with specific regions in Asia, and Furuoka (2000) studied the sanction aspect of Japan's aid and its impacts on aid receiving states.

Apart from the English written material, Japanese written works have also been produced in large quantities at the same time. While English literature focuses more on Japanese aid policy as a whole from an 'outsider' viewpoint, the 'insider' perception concentrated on Japan's domestic political dynamics as to the conforming of the aid. This work has been undertaken by local scholars such as Sumi (1989, 1992), Igarashi (1990), Kusano (1993), Nishigaki and Shimomura (1993), Shiratori (1995), Shimomura, Nakagawa and Saito (1999), and Watanabe and Miura (2003). Among these scholars, some focus on the positive side and others the negative. These controversial opinions have formed Japan's foreign aid study field.

What is clear in Japan's foreign aid research is that it has been heavily influenced by both its historical development, and by international circumstances. As Rix (1993) states, every nation's foreign aid is affected by its political and economic interests,

¹ The budget for ODA of 2001 decreased by 12.5 percent in comparison to 2000.

social and cultural needs and values.² This is especially true in Japan's case, particularly in regards to its aid programme conforming to Article 14 of the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951, which states that Japan had to pay reparations for its past military occupation history.

Altering its basic objectives to suit the global environment, Japan's foreign aid appears to follow a pattern of development every decade. The 1950s can be called an era of *reparations*. The 1960s characterised Japan's aid as *quantitative expansion* with a substantial boost in economic growth. Japan hit another economic turning point in the 1970s with the 'Nixon Shock' and the 'Oil Crisis', ushering in a period of *reconsiderations*. As Japan emerged as the top aid donor in the 1980s, the United States demanded greater *burden sharing* in the international community.

The 1990s saw a great transition in world politics; an ending of the Cold War and the subsequent Gulf War in 1991. During this period, international criticism attacked Japan's foreign aid as being 'faceless', meaning it only contributed money, but not the human resources for which there was a greater need as a result. Japan started searching for its *own way to maintain its role in the world* in the post Cold War period, which introduced NGO involvement to highlight the contribution of Japan by using NGOs as subcontractors.

Understanding these series of changes helps to explain how Japan's current ODA policies have developed. Therefore, each of the following sections focuses on determining the features and standpoints of Japan's traditional foreign aid strategy during these various periods.

² Alan Rix, *Japan's Foreign Aid Challenge: Policy Reform and Aid Leadership*, (London: Routledge, 1993), 15.

The 1950s: The Era of 'Baisho' or Reparation to Those Damaged in the War

As mentioned earlier, Japan's foreign aid started through its reparations obligation under the Colombo Plan in 1955 to those countries which had been occupied by the Japanese military during the War.³ The reparations were accepted by the Development Assistance Community (DAC), an offshoot of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), as a component of Japan's aid.⁴ Actual reparation payments started with requests from Burma/Myanmar in 1964, followed by Indonesia, the Philippines, and finally, the Republic of Vietnam. Reparation-like payments⁵ were also made to countries which had not specifically requested the reparation such as Cambodia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Republic of Korea.⁶ Some countries such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the People's Republic of China, the Republic of China (Taiwan) and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, have not asked for reparations. This still appears as *Rekishii Mondai* (the history issue) in the present foreign policy alongside the official apology issue.⁷ The history issue between Japan and other states started from this point. China and South Korea consider Japan has not given enough *Syazai* or 'apologies' that it owes them since the War.⁸ Therefore, these two states often raise the issue and demand that Japan make official apologies such as putting it in writing as a record for the future⁹.

³ See The Colombo Plan Headquarters homepage. "The Colombo Plan," About Us, n.d., <www.colombo-plan.org for more information> (4 January 2006). The Colombo Plan was "conceived at a meeting of British Commonwealth foreign ministers at Colombo in January 1950 and put in effect in July 1951. The aim was to provide economic aid to areas of South and Southeast Asia." from the homepage of the Colombo Plan referred above.

⁴ Sukehiro Hasegawa, Japanese Foreign Aid: Policy and Practice (New York: Praeger Publisher, 1975), 40.

⁵ It has actually taken the form of a "Grant", which requires no repayment.

⁶ Hasegawa, Japanese Foreign Aid: Policy and Practice, 13.

⁷ Hasegawa, 40.

⁸ There are a lot of debates over whether the compensation for these states was completed or not, but this thesis will not go too far and refers to the Japanese official comments because the topic is too vast to cover in the thesis.

⁹ Examples of history issues include forced labour, forced prostitution, and *Yasukuni Shrine* (a

Japan, on the other hand, considers that it has fulfilled reparation for these two countries by reparation-like payments¹⁰ and is afraid that any further apology will hurt the remaining families of dead soldiers. Yet, the Japanese government wishes to improve foreign relations with China and South Korea, so this history issue remains unresolved.

It is important to mention here that, although the reparations were essentially meant to be for other countries, they have never exceeded one percent of Japan's gross domestic product (GDP). So, it can be argued that the Japanese reparation system helped its own reconstruction rather than benefiting the recipient countries. In this aspect, Hasegawa (1975) concludes that Japan's post-War reparation policy had "the effects of both reparations and reparation-like payments... encouraging rather than demanding, the rehabilitation of the Japanese economy."¹¹

The 1960s: The Era of Quantitative Expansion by Boosting Japan's Economy

After the period of reparation, which had helped to reconstruct Japan's war-damaged economy, an expansion stage followed boosting the economy. With its fast growth, Japan tried to catch up with the economic pace of other Western developed countries. As a result, Japan began to join and establish aid-related entities in order to fulfil its aid obligation. Furuoka (2000) calls it the 'institutionalisation of Japan's aid giving'. Over this period, Japan took a leading role in various aid institutions including the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 1966, joining DAC in 1964, and establishing the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) in 1961 and the Overseas Technical

Japanese war shrine). Japan has been requested to make an official apology for its atrocities during the war and compensate victims.

¹⁰ Some say that ODA is considered to be a form of reparation for neighbouring Asian states, which suffered from the war.

¹¹ Hasegawa, Japanese Foreign Aid: Policy and Practice, 46.

Cooperation Agency (OCTA) in 1962.¹² During this time, Japan also hosted the first Ministerial Conference for the Economic Development of Southeast Asia in 1966.

During this decade, the Japanese government focused on strengthening diplomatic relations with Southeast Asian countries. In this period, the aid was aimed at maintaining the political stability of Japan's major Asian trading partners as any instability within these states had a direct affect on Japan's imports and exports. As a result of fulfilling this aim, the actual share of aid distribution in Asian countries constituted 98 percent of Japan's total aid flow through this decade.¹³

Wright-Neville (1991) notes that Japan's foreign aid in the 1950s and 1960s, "came to be considered as one contribution toward the maintenance of the post-war international order".¹⁴ However, criticism rose from DAC, especially since Japan's aid was not keeping pace with its GNP growth,¹⁵ and the Yen Loan, which requires a future repayment with interest although it is low, constituted more of its total aid than its aid Grant, which needs no repayment.¹⁶ That means Japan's foreign aid was more focused on its own economic interest than benefiting recipient states. Rix (1993) also comments that the characteristics of Japan's aid policy were an "absence of humanitarian values" and "lack of a concept of charity".¹⁷

The criticism that Japan's foreign aid was lacking in moral ethical concerns continued into subsequent decades. There are two obvious reasons for the self-serving nature of

¹² OCTA was a predecessor of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, which is a major aid-related agency currently.

¹³ Fumitaka Furuoka, An Inquiry into the Principles of Japan's Aid Policy, (PhD diss., University Sains Malaysia, 2000), 46.

¹⁴ David Wright-Neville, The Evolution of Japanese Foreign Aid 1955-1990, Monograph No.2, (Clayton: Monash Development Studies Centre, 1991), 72.

¹⁵ The ODA percentage of GNP increased from 0.15 percent in 1960 to 0.26 percent in 1969, however, its ratio was still under the average of DAC member countries which was 0.36%.

¹⁶ The share of the Yen Loan was 49 percent and the Grant was 28 percent in 1969.

¹⁷ Alan Rix, Japan's Foreign Aid Challenge: Policy reform and aid leadership (London: Routledge, 1993), 15.

Japan's aid. Firstly, Japan's international role at this time was relatively unimportant, so domestic factors such as development of its economy and interests overwhelmingly affected the development of its aid policy.¹⁸ Secondly, being under the post-War umbrella of US security, Japan could use foreign aid to reconstruct its diplomatic relations by directing aid where it would be politically advantageous.¹⁹

The 1970s: The Era of Securing Resources

During the 1960s, it was obvious that the main motive for Japan's aid was to promote its own economic interests. However, the 1970s represented some major changes in Japan's aid policy. Some of these were the result of, or reaction to, international events, while others were driven by domestic causes.

International circumstances affecting aid policy can be characterised by two events that plunged the Japanese economy into turmoil through the 1970s: (1) the 'Nixon Shock' in 1971 and, (2) the 'Oil Crisis' in 1973. The 'Oil Crisis' had a particularly profound influence on Japan's aid policy long after the event.

The first, the 'Nixon Shock', occurred when the United States President Richard Nixon visited China without informing Japan. At this time, the United States had no formal diplomatic relations with China and nor had Japan, as both states had anti-communist foreign policies. Though this is seemingly unrelated to Japan's direct relations with the United States, it did show Japan that the United State would not hesitate to act in its own best interests and indirectly risk Japan's national interest. In doing so, the Japanese government had realised that an "alliance with the United States

¹⁸ Wright-Neville, The Evolution of Japanese Foreign Aid 1955-1990, 74.

¹⁹ Koppel, Bruce M. and Orr, Robert M. Jr, ed., Japan's Foreign Aid: Power and Policy in a New Era, (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 342.

could have its cost as well as its benefit.’²⁰

While still suffering the effects of the ‘Nixon Shock’, Japan encountered another major international crisis, the ‘Oil Crisis’. In 1973, the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) started increasing the oil price and threw the world economy into panic. Japan was designated as one of the ‘unfriendly’ countries, and faced a huge ten percent reduction in its monthly OPEC oil supply. For Japan, a resource-poor country, their decision was devastating. In return for lifting the imposed reduction, OPEC countries demanded that Japan increase its level of economic aid and private investment in the Arab region. In compliance, Japan decided to provide three billion JPY in aid to the Arab countries for its ‘kind concern’.²¹

Learning from the crisis, Japan sought to consolidate its position of ‘resource nationalism’ by following a plan of increasing the number of countries supplying it with vital resources. After the oil incident in 1973, it would no longer be reliant on one region for essential resources.

Following these incidents, Japan understood more clearly its need to look after its own interests in the international community.²² As a result, the number of aid receiving countries was increased, and so was the aid budget for countries with raw materials, such as Indonesia. On the other hand, countries which did not possess much in the way of resources such as South Korea, Cambodia, and Thailand, did not receive any additional benefit.²³ The aid to Asia dropped to 69 percent in 1979 compared with 88 percent of total aid distribution in 1973.²⁴

²⁰ Wright-Neville, The Evolution of Japan’s Foreign Aid 1955-1999, 76.

²¹ Sandra Tarte, Japan’s Aid Diplomacy and the Pacific Islands, National Centre for Development Studies, (Canberra: The Australian National University, 1998), 23.

²² Koppel and Orr, Japan’s Foreign Aid: Power and Policy in a New Era, 348.

²³ Wright-Neville, The Evolution of Japan’s Foreign Aid 1955-1990, 66.

²⁴ Furuoka, An Inquiry into the Principles of Japan’s Aid Policy, 47- 48.

The 'Oil Crisis' also made Japan realise that foreign aid was the major leverage in international relations for Japan. It was able to lift the penalty off its shoulders because it had a large quantity of aid for distribution to those penalising countries.

In addition to these international causes, some domestic issues also affected Japan's foreign aid strategy. Towards the late 1970s, Japan's aid became 'a central component of Japan's nascent peace diplomacy'²⁵ and paved Japan's path to becoming the top donor of the next decade.

The 'Medium-term Target' policy was introduced in 1977, doubling the amount of the foreign aid allocated within the next five years. The 1978 guideline stated that, to provide aid to countries bordering areas of conflict such as Turkey, Pakistan and Thailand, it would have to be reduced in other countries such as Afghanistan, Angola, Cambodia, Cuba, Ethiopia and Vietnam. This policy was based on the influence of the United States security umbrella. Although Japan started matching policies in its own national interest, its continued reliance on the United States for security indirectly influenced the development of Japan's strategic interests and aid policies.

Japan's fast growing economy also attracted attention, scrutiny and pressure from the international community. According to Wright-Neville (1991), Japanese aid in the 1950s and 1960s was initially directed by domestic factors and 'cultural values', but in the late 1970s, international pressure started to shape its aid more than domestic issues.

The 1980s: Burden Sharing but No Altruism as Top Donor

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) has described the reasons for Japan's provision of foreign aid as "these countries are impoverished and are in need of

²⁵ Tarte, Japan's Aid Diplomacy and the Pacific Islands, 25.

assistance from richer nations including Japan...”²⁶ MOFA adds that: “by helping to promote economic standards and stabilize living standards...Japan not only strengthens its friendship and interdependence with the region, but also contributes to peace and stability at both the regional and global levels.”²⁷ This shows a new direction in Japan’s aid strategy in order for it to play an initiative role in international relations. As Japan became a predominant aid donor, an even greater amount of aid was expected. This increased burden characterised Japan’s foreign aid in the 1980s.

By 1988, Japan had become the top donor of foreign aid with regard to the total amount of its ODA. The period from the 1970s onwards also gave rise to Japan’s focus on resource security.²⁸ Concurrently with this, as Japan emerged in the international community as a great economic power, it was required to share the burden of maintaining international peace. Based on the aid philosophy developed by the Ohira and Takeshita administrations, aid policies became the main tool in this new role.

In April 1981, the then Prime Minister (PM) Ohira announced Japan’s aid philosophy.²⁹ This was the first definitive standard of aid philosophy since Japan started its foreign aid programme in 1955. Yasutomo (1986) states the following three points of this newly established aid philosophy: Japan’s aid is “a necessary ‘cost’ if Japan is to remain a peaceful country”, “a necessary ‘cost’ if Japan is to remain an economic great power” and “aid can strengthen weak spots in overseas economic dependence.”³⁰ Ohira’s aid philosophy incurred some criticism from the international

²⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) Japan’s ODA 1990, (Tokyo: Association for Promotion of International Cooperation [APIC]), 3.

²⁷ MOFA, Japan’s ODA 1991, (Tokyo: APIC, 1992), 21.

²⁸ Koppel and Orr, Japan’s Foreign Aid: Power and Policy in a New Era, 10.

²⁹ The book was published as Keizai Kyooryoku Kenkyuukai ed, Keizai Kyoryoku no Rinen – Seihu Kaihatsu Enjo wo Naze Okonawunoka (The Philosophy of Economic Cooperation: Why Give Official Development Assistance?), (Tokyo: MOF, 1980). Two principles of Japanese economic cooperation strategy, humanitarian consideration and mutual reliance, were confirmed in this book.

³⁰ Dennis T. Yasutomo, The Manner of Giving: Strategic Aid and Japanese Foreign Policy,

community for its apparent lack of altruism. More specifically it was criticised because “little mention is made of the role of aid as a means for the alleviation of poverty..., or of aid as a moral obligation incurred by virtue of a universal humanity.”³¹

Eight years later, in 1988, PM Takeshita Noboru clearly expressed in the document, “International Cooperation Initiative” how aid should be aimed. He emphasised “cooperation towards achievement of peace, expansion of official development assistance and promotion of international cultural exchange”³² Again, in this guideline, there is no mention of humanitarianism or altruism. In the same year, the government deployed a major untied aid campaign³³ to avert international criticism based on Japan serving only its domestic firms using tied aid.³⁴ However, the international community still criticised Japan’s closed market, low ratio of aid per gross national product (GNP)³⁵, infrastructure concentration, as well as aspects of its aid programme that clearly sought to benefit Japanese firms rather than just providing aid.³⁶

Japan faced a need to encounter these negative criticisms from other aid donors. As Tarte (1998) mentions, “the more visible Japan became as a donor, the more criticism it attracted”.³⁷ Throughout the 1980s, as Japan grew to be the top donor of foreign aid, it also faced an increasing international demand to apply moral judgement in aid development. Owing to the Marcos scandals in the Philippines in the 1980s,³⁸ there was

(Massachusetts: Lexington Books, 1986), 51.

³¹ Wright-Neville, The Evolution of Japanese Foreign Aid 1955-1990, 85.

³² MOFA, Japan’s ODA 1990, (Tokyo: APIC, 1991), 6.

³³ “Tied aid” means when the aid recipient country is required to purchase goods and materials from the aid country. “untied aid” means, in contrast, that recipient country has no such obligations. (Furuoka, 2002:16.)

³⁴ Koppel and Orr, Japan’s Foreign Aid: Power and Policy in a New Era, 10.

³⁵ MOFA, Japan’s ODA 1998, (Tokyo: APIC, 1999), 6.

³⁶ Tarte, Japan’s Aid Diplomacy and the Pacific Islands, 30- 31.

³⁷ Tarte, 31.

³⁸ This scandal was about illicit ODA contracts between the Philippines government and several Japanese companies for creating mutual benefits which appeared to the Japanese public following the downfall of the President Ferdinand Marcos in 1986.

considerable domestic pressure from taxpayers over the inefficiency of large-quantity aid spending.

To ease these tensions, the government created a cabinet committee on ODA. However, the dilemma that the government was experiencing during this time was that there were too many interests and demands coming from all directions both foreign and domestic. The international community required that Japan play a more political role in maintaining international peace and security, while at the same time domestic administrative ministries focused more on the development of policies concerning respective trade, investment and resource security. It can be said that trying to accommodate all these different aims in Japan's aid policy, made the philosophy vague and general.

The 1990s: Adjusting to the Global Context

With the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Cold War system which had determined much of the world's foreign policy since the Second World War, came to an end. The end of the Cold War denoted a victory for Western liberal democratic values, and the promotion of these values emerged as a new global trend. As Japan's foreign aid was a major part of its foreign policy, Japan worked in line with this trend, even though Japanese aid had been criticised as lacking humanitarian objectivity.³⁹ While characterising Japan's foreign aid, Orr (1993) states that, "there is the money but not vision."⁴⁰ At the same time, Japan's lack of physical participation in the Gulf War brought the most severe criticism from the international community, which described Japan's foreign policy as 'faceless'. This begs the question: 'to whom has Japan's

³⁹ Rix, Japan's Foreign Aid Challenge: Policy reform and aid leadership, 15.

⁴⁰ Koppel and Orr, ed., Japan's Foreign Aid: Power and Policy in a New Era, 342.

foreign policy been faceless?’ Some academics have stated Japan’s foreign policy has been faceless to aid receiving countries for not providing much in terms of human resources. Others say that it was faceless with regard to fellow aid donor countries due to its lack of a clear strategy.⁴¹ Together, the end of the Cold War and the subsequent first Gulf War, challenged Japan’s foreign aid in the 1990s and brought about drastic changes.

The Present: Creating its Own Path of Aid

In the previous sections, the traditional foreign aid of Japan has been characterised by both quantitative expansion and political non-intervention. Considering the deep memories of the Japanese military occupation in neighbouring Asian countries, the Japanese government has resisted attaching political conditions to its aid in this region for fear of perceived involvement in the internal affairs of receiving states.⁴² This attitude has been bitterly criticised by other Western donor states, which wanted Japan to play a more active role by using its substantial aid power as a sanction tool. The Japanese government has justified its position of not employing foreign aid as a sanction tool by referring to Japan’s own aid-receiving experience. As a result of these experiences, Japan promotes the concept of “self-help” but refuses to interfere in the domestic politics of recipient states. However, because of globalisation, Japan can no longer pursue its traditional non-interventionist aid policies.

In 1991, in response to global trends, the then PM Kaifu Toshiki announced a new aid guideline. This new guideline placed a new set of conditions on the recipient states, taking into account their military policy, economic policy and political situation, prior

⁴¹ Takeshi Igarashi, ed., Nihon no ODA to Kokusai Chitsujyo (Japan’s ODA and an international order) (Tokyo: Japan Institute of International Affairs (JIIA), 1990), 40.

⁴² Furuoka, An Inquiry into the Principles of Japan’s Aid Policy, 33.

to the commencement of Japanese aid.⁴³ In contrast to the previous unconditional aid policy guidelines (Ohira and Takeshita), this was the first time that foreign aid came with political conditions attached.

In 1992, Japan established the ODA Charter, with four principles setting out the conditions for aid donation. They are:

- 1) The simultaneous pursuit of environmental conservation and development;
- 2) Avoiding the use of ODA for military purposes for aggravation of international conflicts;
- 3) Paying close attention to trends in recipient countries' military expenditures, development and production of weapons of mass destruction, and export and import of arms;
- 4) Paying close attention to efforts in promoting democratisation and introduction of market-oriented economies, and to the conditions related to basic human rights and freedoms.⁴⁴

Particular attention should be given to the fourth principle which states that: "full attention should be paid to efforts in promoting democratisation and the introduction of a market-oriented economy, and the situation regarding the security of basic human rights and freedoms in recipient countries."⁴⁵ It is clearly shown in this guideline that Japan now attaches political conditions to its aid decisions. This change was an inevitable response to the international pressure to establish Japan's role in the post Cold War era based on the maintenance of international peace and security.

Is Japan Developing its Own Path?

⁴³ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1991, (Tokyo: APIC, 1992), 34.

⁴⁴ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1992, 45.

⁴⁵ MOFA, 45.

Some observers comment that Japan's aid policy has remained a reactive policy. Yasutomo (1990) considers that Japan always pursued its own interest in foreign aid policy, but it seemed reactive only because that interest did not contradict that of the United States.⁴⁶ Orr (1991) contends that Japan now possesses different considerations towards human rights and political development as a result of the impact of Western liberal democratic values. This is revealed in Japan's aid to Iran and China, where other donor countries such as the United States suspended their aid. Recently, the aid to Burma/Myanmar also re-started despite the many human rights abuse cases reported by NGOs closely working with local people.⁴⁷ Tarte (1998) argues that Japan started building its own path, distinct from the United States and other Western nations, to express its own political concerns through aid. Often the development of these policies could be seen as breaking concert with the United States' foreign policy.⁴⁸

Although some claim that Japan pursues its own aid strategy based on its own interest, overall, Japan's foreign aid has reflected international events and concerns with a remarkable hypersensitivity. The above analysis of the history of Japan's foreign aid has clarified its reactionary nature. Being reactive in part has protected Japan from taking too active a role in the international community, which could raise doubts in other Asian neighbours. Over the last decade, however, Japan has started using its foreign aid more actively to show a 'human face' in foreign policy, employing NGOs as surrogate aid institutions.

⁴⁶ Dennis T. Yasutomo, "Nihon Gaiko to ODA Seisaku (Japan's foreign policy and ODA policy)", in Nihon no ODA to Kokusai Chitsujyo (Japan's ODA and the international order), trans. Katsuhiro Syoji, ed. Takeshi Igarashi, (Tokyo: Japan Institute of International Affairs [JIIA], 1990), 89.

⁴⁷ Mekong Watch Japan, Development, Environment, and Human Rights in Burma/Myanmar – Examining the Impacts of ODA and Investment, Public Symposium Report, December (Tokyo: Mekong Watch, 2001), 3.

⁴⁸ Tarte, Japan's Aid Diplomacy and the Pacific Islands, 33-34.

3.2 Categories and Decision-Making Processes of Japan's ODA

Three Categories and Three Different Decision-Making Processes

There are three aid providing schemes in Japan's ODA. They are: *Bilateral Grant*, *Bilateral Loan (Yen Loan)* and *Multilateral Grant*. Each category possesses its own major administrators and decision-making processes, which has complicated Japan's ODA administration and stimulated a lot of criticism domestically and internationally. Four major actors are usually identified. These are: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the Ministry of Finance (MOF), the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) and the Economic Planning Agency (EPA). In addition to these key players, there are a number of other agencies related to Japan's foreign aid. This section studies each ODA category and highlights its features and issues.

No Repayment Needed: Bilateral Grant

Bilateral Grant is, "a form of foreign aid that does not impose a repayment obligation."⁴⁹ There are two categories of Bilateral Grant: *Grant Aid* and *Technical Cooperation*. The first sub group of the Bilateral Grant, *Grant Aid* is under the MOFA's supervision. The second group, *Technical Cooperation*, is carried out by the Japan International Cooperation Agency; the aid implementing agency that is under the MOFA's jurisdiction. The MOFA occupies a crucial part of Japan's ODA as a whole since the aid strategy is a major tool of Japan's foreign policy. Hirata (1998) describes in detail how the MOFA has played a pivotal role in Japan's aid programme as follows:

The MOFA is the most prominent ministry concerned with Japan's aid. It not only participates in the decision making of loan aid through the four-ministry

⁴⁹ Furuoka, *An Inquiry into the Principles of Japan's Aid Policy*, 60.

system but also takes responsibility for Japanese grants...the ministry takes charge of coordinating with the other ministries that also carry out ODA activities under their own budgets. MOFA also receives the largest ODA budget in the aid administration.⁵⁰

Grant Aid covers the following six categories: 1) General, 2) Fishery, 3) Cultural, 4) Food Aid and 6) Aid for Increased Food Production. The first category of General Grants is divided into four further areas; 1) General Project Grant Aid, 2) Grant Aid for Debt Relief, 3) Non-Project Grant Aid, and 4) Grants for Grassroots Projects. Among these four areas of General Grants, attention should be paid to Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects, since this is the scheme through which the Japanese government supports NGO activities. This grant aid is for “a scheme of assistance in response to [a]request from a developing country’s local public bodies, research and medical institutions, and NGOs and similar groups active in developing countries.”⁵¹ Features of this assistance are: 1) small-scale project implementation, 2) the MOFA’s sole approval and 3) a fast approval process due to only the MOFA being involved.⁵² The main aim of this scheme is fast provision of aid. This is because the old style of grant aid was characterised by a large budget and slow procedures, which meant it was hard to address local needs in developing countries which were usually urgent and with problems at the grassroots.

⁵⁰ Keiko Hirata, “New Challenges to Japan’s Aid: An Analysis of Aid Policy-Making,” Pacific Affairs 71, no.3 (1998): 314.

⁵¹ MOFA, Japan’s ODA 1998, 109.

⁵² Furuoka, An Inquiry into the Principles of Japan’s Aid Policy, 61.

The Decision-Making Process of the Bilateral Grant

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) has been the major administrator of this scheme, but when it comes to discussion over the budget, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) has come to compete against the MOFA. When competition between major aid-related ministries occurs, it influences the direction of the policy regardless of its effectiveness because each actor possesses its own interests and aims. It is not only between the MOFA and the MOF, but when a business sector presents a strong demand about an aid programme such as supplying resources for the programme, the MITI also interrupts the competitive relationship. Rix (1993) describes this as follows:

It is often said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs seeks to enhance Japan's security and image through aid, whereas the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) has primarily trade promotion in mind, and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) has kept the purse strings tied tightly.⁵³

You Have to Repay Later: Bilateral Loans (Yen Loans)

Bilateral Loans are usually known as 'Yen Loans' and according to Okuizumi (1995), their primary aim was to provide aid for economic infrastructure projects.⁵⁴ They comprise about 30 percent, and sometimes close to half of the total ODA, and are thus a major form of Japanese aid.⁵⁵ The MOFA describes the Bilateral Loan as follows: "ODA Loans (Yen Loans) lend funds for development at low interest for long periods to developing countries."⁵⁶ Project Loans, Non-Project Loans and Debt

⁵³ Rix, Japan's Foreign Aid Challenge: Policy Reform and Aid Leadership, 19-20.

⁵⁴ Kaoru Okuizumi, "Implementing ODA Charter," New York University Journal of International Law and Politics 27, no. 2 (Winter) (1995): 367-406.

⁵⁵ Furuoka, An Inquiry into the Principles of Japan's Aid Policy, 111.

⁵⁶ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1998, 81-91

Rescheduling are the three areas in this category.

According to Furuoka (2000), the loan implementation decision depends on considerations regarding the stages of development of recipients; terms are changed according to the country's ability to repay the loans and its economic conditions.

The Ministry of Finance (MOF), in its position of budget administrator in Japan's bureaucracy, has the strongest impact on the Bilateral Loan of Japan's ODA (a further analysis will follow in the next sub-section). Since the MOF has stressed the ability of the recipient to repay the loans in future, the Bilateral Loan tends not to cover countries most in need of aid, many of which are very poor and have a lower likelihood of repayment. This aspect of the Bilateral Loan has attracted international criticism of Japan's aid, since it is seen to be self-serving and not helping the poorer states.

Decision-Making Process of the Bilateral Loan

The Bilateral Loan decision-making process is much more complicated than that of the Bilateral Grant because all the major aid players are involved. Furuoka (2000) reflected on this point clearly by citing Orr (1993) that every single loan extended must go through a decision-making process that includes participants or representatives of each of the four government agencies (MOFA, MOF, MITI and EPA) as indicated in advance.⁵⁷ Orr (1993) supposes that the MOF favours loans over the grant because it has much more impact on the lending issue and is able to exert influence over loans in comparison to grants over which the MOFA has a certain influence.

Money Check without the Country's Name: The Multilateral Grant

⁵⁷ Furuoka, An Inquiry into Principles of Japan's Aid Policy, 82.

The third category of Japan's aid is the **Multilateral Grant**, in other words, contributions to international organizations. It is in this way that Japan shows international cooperation by giving aid indirectly under MOFA's supervision. In fact, the government, by being a top donor, has much power over the Asian Development Bank (ADB), one of the major multilateral financial organisations. Furthermore, the president of the ADB is traditionally chosen from among Japanese nationals.⁵⁸

The government officially makes a statement regarding the importance of multilateral grants to Japan in their annual aid reports. In comparison with bilateral aid, the government's official report lists four advantages of multilateral aid:

- 1) It makes use of the specialized knowledge of the various international organisations,
- 2) It secures the political neutrality of aid,
- 3) It establishes new relations with countries such as in Africa, with which Japan has had little human interchange, and
- 4) It brings about improvements in the tying status and quality of ODA.⁵⁹

The Japanese government agrees with the importance of donations to international organisations such as the United Nations. It states that aid through multilateral institutions has different advantages from those of bilateral aid including the ability of multilateral agencies to draw on the expert knowledge and experience to which they have access by virtue of their association with the global network.⁶⁰

On the other hand, Japan's contribution to multilateral agencies as a percentage of

⁵⁸ Furuoka, An Inquiry into Principles of Japan's Aid Policy, 64.

⁵⁹ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1988, 57.

⁶⁰ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1996, 132.

its total ODA in 1993 and 1994 averaged 28.1 percent, which was lower than the two-year average of other DAC member countries.⁶¹

The ratio of Japan's contribution to international institutions (Multilateral Grant) presents it is important to Japan but much of the past contribution (1988-1997) has gone to international finance institutions such as World Bank group, which directly work on international financial issues.⁶² The less amount of the contribution has gone to other organizations working indirectly on aid issues such as human rights and over-population. This is due to the fact that with multilateral donations, it is impossible for Japan to show its 'face' or 'name' in recipient countries since financial support through this system is associated with no particular names. Although it is possible for Japan to be listed among major donor countries to multilateral agencies in their annual reports, Japan is nevertheless eager to seek direct recognition from recipients because its aid is a major tool for constructing bilateral relations in the international community. As stated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), "As development assistance is an effective diplomatic tool, bilateral ODA will continue to represent a large portion of Japan's aid."⁶³

Decision-Making Process of the Multilateral Grant

As clearly shown by the MOFA, multilateral grants are a less important aid scheme in comparison to bilateral grant and loans. This may be why, according to Rix (1980), the decision-making procedure for multilateral aid is rather straightforward compared to the other schemes since its contribution is governed by international treaties and

⁶¹ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1996, 132.

⁶² For the ratio, refer to MOFA, Japan's ODA 1998 (Tokyo: APIC, 1999), 131.

⁶³ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1990, 58.

agreements.⁶⁴ However, on the contrary, Rix still states that there is rivalry between the MOFA and MOF.

Contributions to the United Nations and related agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and United Nations World Food Programmes are supervised by the MOFA because it has the United Nations division under its jurisdiction. In contrast, the MOF exerts its influence on capital subscriptions to international financial organisations such as the Asian Development Bank.

3.3 What were the Issues in Traditional Aid Policy?

The previous section discussed the historical background from the 1950s to 2000 and onward, as well as the structures of Japan's aid programmes. Through the history it becomes clear that the more powerful and visible Japan has become as a donor, the more attention has been paid to it by the international community, especially other aid donors. Japan's aid has been labelled bitterly as 'faceless', 'lacking altruism', 'self-centred', 'on a commercial basis' and so forth by critics. Also, from the structural analysis, some crucial issues have appeared, such as the complexity of aid administration which involves too many key players. This situation has invited severe criticism as well.

As a response to this criticism, the Japanese government has set up a new aid policy line in which the emphasis is more on *Software*, which is human resource development, and institution building⁶⁵, providing technology and expertise, than on *Hardware*, which is the "provision of physical construction and equipment⁶⁶" in the 1990s. This is partly symbolised by the adoption of the ODA Charter in 1992. However, the questions still

⁶⁴ Alan Rix, Japan's Economic Aid: Policymaking and Politics, (London: Croom Helm, 1980), 127.

⁶⁵ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1994, 60-64.

⁶⁶ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1994, 60-64.

remain and these are:. Which issues in the aid programmes themselves that attracted ‘criticism’ brought the government to change its aid strategy? What sort of issues has the government tried to settle with the new aid policy line?

Before analysing Japan’s new aid policy itself, in which NGOs play significant roles, it is important to study several other aid issues more carefully in addition to those already addressed in the previous section. This is because the government has tried to counter ‘criticism’ with a new solution; a new aid policy. Identifying the existing issues in the aid programme will enable clarification of the features of the new aid policy in comparison. This section analyses the issues and problems in Japan’s aid structure and administration, which underlie the introduction of the new aid policy.

General Criticism in the Past Studies

There is a huge amount of research on Japan’s aid policy, and most of this refers to problems. This highlights how problematic and difficult Japan’s foreign aid has been. Several problems have been identified in existing studies. For example, Rix (1993) considers five crucial problems in Japan’s aid programme. They are:

- 1) Shortage of aid administration staff
- 2) Cross-agency barriers
- 3) Large-scale emphasis
- 4) Diffuse responsibility between agencies
- 5) Inter-ministry rivalry within JICA.⁶⁷

Rix’s points covers most of the general criticism of Japan’s foreign aid. Wright-Neville

⁶⁷ Rix, Japan’s Foreign Aid Challenge: Policy reform and aid leadership, 87.

(1991) mentions the request-based nature of Japan's aid policy which has borne a linkage between overseas consultants, Japanese construction firms, and politicians.⁶⁸ This problem also links the shortage of aid staff (**Appendix 2: Figure 1**) to dependency on consultants and firms which possess significantly more information network systems than the government.⁶⁹ With regard to a small number of staff, Hirata (1998) analyses that it included the involvement of NGOs to fill the shortage of aid administrators.⁷⁰ This correlates with the government's original intention to make use of NGOs as supplementary to its official aid activities.

Complications of Aid Administration

The complications and difficulties of Japan's aid programme are well known. Many studies have been undertaken by both domestic and overseas researchers. Rix (1993) states that Japan's aid programme is, "of day-to-day decisions across the whole of the Japanese government system."⁷¹ That means that Japan's aid programme is formed through each ministry's daily routine, with no single administration body. According to the MOFA's classification, Japan's ODA can be categorised into the following three: the *Bilateral Grant*, the *Bilateral Loan* (also known as the *Yen Loan*) and the *Multilateral Grant* or Contribution to International Organisations. Unlike other aid donor states which possess a single aid agency such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Canadian International Development Agency, Australia's AusAID, and the New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID), Japan has no such agency. Many ministries and agencies are involved in the

⁶⁸ Wright-Neville, *The Evolution of Japan's Foreign Aid 1955-1990*, 48.

⁶⁹ Rix, *Japan's Foreign Aid Challenge: Policy reform and aid leadership*, 87.

⁷⁰ Hirata, "New Challenge to Japan's Aid: An Analysis of Aid Policy-Making", 317.

⁷¹ Rix, *Japan's Foreign Aid Challenge: Policy reform and aid leadership*, 72.

aid programme. Keizo Takemi, a member of the Liberal Democratic Party's Special Committee on External Economic Cooperation, has argued on this point:

Simply forming new organs or reshuffling existing ones is not an effective way to make the Japanese bureaucracy function. To foster new systems for formulating policy, it is often better to work them smoothly into the existing government organisations.⁷²

However, he has failed to mention the drawbacks in a multiple aid administration.

NZAID, the newly founded (in 2002) aid implementing agency of New Zealand, can provide a good comparison. As shown in the table, it is easy to determine the advantages of establishing a single aid agency for a more effective aid programme (**Appendix 2: Table 1**). Establishing a single aid administration has remained a 'hot' issue, but it has always been confronted with opposition from authorities, especially from the MOFA, which has been afraid of losing its position among inter-ministry competition using ODA policy, and the idea dissolved at the end.

Single Aid Agency Issue

The absence of a single aid agency has attracted much criticism from other countries. This is because these ministries and agencies are viewed as serving their own interests in providing aid, and have little intention to serve the aid policy as a whole. An example of this can be seen in an aid budget distributed among 18 ministries and agencies. Each ODA scheme (bilateral grant, bilateral loan and multilateral grant) has its own decision-making procedure, actors, and also influence, which has made the general aid

⁷² Keizo Takemi, "A New Direction for Japan's Aid Program", Japan Echo30, no.3, June 2003: 23.

decision-making process vague and unclear. As a result, the efficiency of Japan's aid has been questioned.

Inter-Ministry Rivalry and 'Too Many Actors'

It is often asserted that the most serious problem in Japan's aid is "the competitive, vertical structure of the aid administration which prevents extensive horizontal communication between the many elements of the bureaucracy involved in aid."⁷³ As indicated above, each ODA scheme possesses its own procedures and related actor. Among ministries and agencies involved in aid, the more influential actors are the MOFA, the Ministry of Finance (MOF), the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) and the Economic Planning Agency (EPA). Together, they are called the *Yon-Sho-Cho Taisei* or the 'four ministries system'. Although several other ministries and agencies have shared the aid budget and influence over the policy, the actual aid programme has been very much directed by the above four actors and agencies under their jurisdiction, such as Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) as the MOFA's external body.

Each ministry and agency has various roles, interests, purposes and structures in aid administration. The MOFA acts in the context of diplomacy and foreign policy to improve Japan's image in the international community by converting views of Japan being a mere economic power or a 'free rider' in international security. In order to enhance Japan's good image, this ministry has been sensitive towards concerns of other countries about what they think of the state.

The Ministry of Finance (MOF) can be considered as a financial manager for the country's economy, so its role is to secure a stable financial situation for Japan. The

⁷³ Rix, Japan's Foreign Aid Challenge: Policy reform and aid leadership, 73.

Ministry of International Trade and Industry has a similar role, but it acts more in promoting Japan's private business sectors. Therefore, contradiction and conflicts have often occurred between the MOFA and the other two ministries. The former focused on Japan's international reputation and the latter on promoting Japan as an economic power. Rix (1993) describes this situation as follows:

It is often said that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs seeks to enhance Japan's security and image through aid, whereas the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) has primarily trade promotion in mind, and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) has kept the purse strings locked tight.⁷⁴

Wright-Neville (1991) claims that bureaucrats had more loyalty to their parent ministries than to the government.⁷⁵ Inevitably, conflicts exist between the ministries.

Three ministries have their own aid implementing agencies under their jurisdictions as well, which contributes to the complicated form of aid administration. The MOFA exerts much influence over the Grant Aid and the administration of JICA, which controls a part of the Grant Aid. The MOF is in charge of the Yen Loan scheme, supervises the Export-import Bank (Exim Bank) and also has a certain influence on the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF). Although the Economic Planning Agency (EPA) was technically responsible for the OECF, presidents of the agency are traditionally retired MOF officials. This situation explains how the MOF is influential over the OECF in comparison to Japanese presidents of the ADB. Both agencies were combined into the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) at a later stage.

⁷⁴ Rix, 19- 20.

⁷⁵ Wright-Neville, The Evolution of Japan's Foreign Aid 1955-1990, 52

Major Actors in Japan's Decision-Making

There is little doubt that the 'four ministries system' was one of the major problems in Japanese foreign aid. However, the problem which affected the overall aid structure in Japan lay in Japan's general decision-making system. The 'Iron Triangle' was the traditional term given to the decision-making process of Japan and had a huge influence on aid policy making during the period focused on here, though there were several other semi actors.⁷⁶ It was called 'triangle' because politicians, bureaucrats and the business sector each took a position of the triangle to form policies, and refused to allow the participation of external actors such as NGOs. The inter-Ministries rivalry which was explained before is involved in this decision-making process and the rivalry among bureaucrats makes the system even more complicated.

A number of researchers have analysed this 'Iron Triangle' way of policy decision-making. This triangle still remains, with some transformation in the participating actors such as the media and fast-growing computer-related firms that keep themselves apart from the rest of established business sector because of their differences in business philosophy and strategy⁷⁷, but it comprised the above three powers in the 1990s. Furuoka (2002) who has analysed Japan's economic sanction policy in the 1990s says, "there is little doubt in Japan that a powerful combination of politicians, bureaucrats and big businesses- the so-called 'Iron Triangle' - has been effectively

⁷⁶ Some scholars say that the "Iron Triangle" theory was already out of date in the 1990s. However, authors believe that this system still had much influence over Japan's decision-making process. This will be explained later.

⁷⁷Traditional Japanese companies have several philosophies in business such as family-like management and the lifetime employment system. This style has its own advantages but it also slowed down the effectiveness of management for over-protection of employers. Newly started firms pursue different viewpoints in their business such as cost-effectiveness by having many young contract-based workers. As a result, new companies have been catching up with traditional companies and performing strongly in the market. Because of these differences in management and envy of the success of the other, relationships between traditional and new companies are often unfriendly.

ruling the country's policymaking.”⁷⁸ He also concludes that it successfully influences Japan's aid policy-making process as well.⁷⁹ Tabb's description identifies the situation of Japan's decision-making process as; “the nexus of corporate interest, the LDP [Liberal Democratic Party], especially the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry has ruled Japan for the last half century.”⁸⁰

As a consequence here, the above three sectors connect with each other for their own interests and mutual benefits. The following section explains each actor and then reveals how they relate to each other, and why it has been problematic for Japan's aid policy-making.

Bureaucracy: 'Amakudari' or Early Retirement System

Bureaucracy is at the centre of Japan's aid programme, as it makes up all four major actors in the ODA. Wright-Neville (1991) describes the attitude of bureaucrats as: “civil servants who are heavily involved in the policy formation process, often exercising a degree of initiative and individuality which would be unacceptable in other advanced industrial democracies.”⁸¹ Although Japan's domestic politics have been dominated by politicians and bureaucrats, Furuoka argued that the trend was not observed in the aid programme.⁸² Regarding this aspect, Hirata (1998) concludes that politicians have less interest in the aid programme because it is a poor vote-catcher.⁸³

The bureaucracy, the most powerful actor in the aid programme has a connection with the other two actors of the triangle, politicians and the business sector. However, it

⁷⁸ Fumitaka Furuoka, “Challenges for Japanese Diplomacy After the End of the Cold War,” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 24, no.1, April (2002): 122.

⁷⁹ Furuoka, 122.

⁸⁰ William K. Tabb, “The End of the Japanese Postwar System”, *Monthly Review* 51, no. 3, (1999): 77.

⁸¹ Wright-Neville, *The Evolution of Japan's Foreign Aid 1955-1990*, 52.

⁸² Furuoka, “Challenges for Japanese Diplomacy After the End of the Cold War”, 122.

⁸³ Hirata, “New Challenges to Japan's Aid: An Analysis of Aid Policy-Making”, 322.

does not spare a place for the external actors such as NGOs.

Matsumoto (1997), who researched Japan's aid programme in the Lao Republic, reveals the ignorance of the actions of external actors by the bureaucracy, stating that bureaucrats superficially say that they are open to external voices such as NGOs. However, whether they are to be referred to the decision-making process or not is totally left to the bureaucrats' preference.⁸⁴

Politicians: Election Campaigns Need Money

According to Orr (1993), there are three functions for the Japanese Diet to implement in the aid programme: 1) to pass the annual aid budget allocation, 2) to pass a special resolution prohibiting the use of foreign aid for certain purposes, and 3) to authorise a carry-over.⁸⁵ He also mentioned that bureaucrats have been drawing a bill of annual aid budget allocation, and in practice, the Diet cannot change a bill once it has been submitted by bureaucrats.⁸⁶

Although politicians rarely have an interest in the aid programme, there are some occasions where they are involved, such as when a business sector lobbies them. There are two channels that politicians can use when they want to influence bureaucrats: 1) lobbying the bureaucrats, 2) and assembly influence through the country's friendship associations. In order to be re-elected, politicians need to run election campaigns and that requires money. On this aspect, politicians can closely link themselves to the business sector. According to Rix, politicians provided solid ODA related contracts to

⁸⁴ Satoru Matsumoto, Mekong-Gawa Kaihatsu: 21 seiki no Kaihatsu Enjyo (Mekong River Development: Development Assistance in the 21st Century), (Tokyo: Tsukiji Syokan, 1997), 177.

⁸⁵ Robert M. Orr., Domestic Dimensions of Japanese Foreign Aid, (Kuala Lumpur: Institute of Strategic and International Studies, 1993), 5

⁸⁶ Orr, 5.

the business sector and asked them to purchase party tickets for fundraising in return.⁸⁷

Business Sector: We Want Stable Government's Funded Projects

There are three main actors in the business sector that have an impact on the aid programme. They are the construction companies, the trading companies and the consulting companies.

There are four possible reasons why the business sector has had an impact on the aid programme as part of the established decision-making process: 1) the absence of a single aid agency, 2) an insufficient number of aid staff, 3) the re-employment of bureaucrats, and 4) a funding source for politicians.

Regarding the lack of a single aid agency, Arase said, "this system of decentralised authority...is also important to the private sector clients of the main ministries and agencies who use bureaucratic sponsorship to gain access to ODA resources."⁸⁸ The insufficient number of aid staff has created the bureaucrats' dependency on trading companies' seconding (*syukko*) to fill the gap in their information gathering. As Orr (1993) indicates, "on the commercial matters trading companies make the American CIA look like amateurs. They are professionally run, with clear commercial objectives."⁸⁹

Among politicians, there is a special group called *Kensetsu Zoku* or "Construction interest group" which maintains a special connection with construction companies. They have a mutual interest in funding resources for politicians and project contracts for construction companies, which makes them closer to each other for mutual benefits.

⁸⁷ Rix, *Japan's Foreign Aid Challenge: Policy reform and aid Leadership*, 55.

⁸⁸ David Arase, "Public-Private Sector Interest Coordination in Japan's ODA," *Pacific Affairs* 67, no.2 (1994): 178,

⁸⁹ Orr, *Domestic Dimensions of Japanese Foreign Aid*, 9-10.

Construction companies lobby politicians to gain access to construction contracts in ODA projects. This is because with ODA, the government is the client, so its payments are always guaranteed.

Trading companies, as well as consulting companies, act as 'Request Makers'. As already indicated, the principal nature of Japan's aid giving is request-based. As Orr (1993) writes, "the trading companies often inform recipient countries of the type of funding they can obtain from Tokyo...The trading companies can advise as well as assist in the negotiation process in Tokyo to ensure that the recipient's request receives a positive response."⁹⁰ As Matsumoto (1997) implies, development assistance projects are owned by the government and consulting companies at the request level.⁹¹

It has been clearly shown above that each actor of the 'Iron Triangle' has been closely connected. The biggest problem in this system was that it was extremely exclusive, and outsiders were hardly ever able to penetrate it. In terms of Japan's foreign aid, outsiders such as NGOs which had been carrying out their own aid activities and gaining a good reputation were ignored by the system. This resulted in a huge loss for the Japanese government. Therefore, when it became necessary to highlight Japan's contribution and presence in the international arena via its foreign aid it was natural for NGOs to become partners. The only miscalculation made by the government was that NGOs have now grown out of their hands.

3.4 Why is a New Aid Policy Line with NGO Participation Needed?

The complexity of Japan's aid programme has been made apparent in the above analysis. There were many '*too*'s in explaining the Japanese aid structure: there were

⁹⁰ Orr, 10.

⁹¹ Matsumoto, Mekon-gawa Kaihatsu: 21 Seiki no Kaihatsu Enjyo (Mekong River Development: (Development Assistance in 21st Century), 179.

too many major actors with *too* many various interests involved in procedures that were *too* complicated. Therefore, a new aid policy line was required in order to make Japanese aid efficient as well as demonstrate Japan's presence in the international community.

Showing Japan's Contribution: Showing its 'face'

After the Gulf War, the Japanese government was urged to show its active contribution in the international arena. As already discussed in this thesis, Japan faced severe criticism for not providing a human contribution to the international crisis scene, but only financial assistance. The intention of the Japanese government to take an active role in the international arena can be read from various sources, especially from its official foreign aid annual reports. The then Prime Minister (PM) Kaifu Toshiki made a speech at the Diet in March 1990 that clarified the Japanese government's intention "to use Japan's economic and technological resources and its past experience as the basis for an active role in international efforts to create a new order."⁹² According to one statement, this is what Japan should do in its foreign aid programme:

Changes in the international community require Japan to make a wide-ranging human contribution, and in addition to assistance at the government level, we also need to consider seriously how individual Japanese can contribute. There is growing awareness in Japan of the importance of aid based on public participation, including activities by local authorities and NGOs.⁹³

⁹² MOFA, Japan's ODA 1991, 3.

⁹³ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1991, 10.

What can be read here is that NGOs were mentioned in terms of the human contribution that Japan was required to make. In Japan's ODA 1994, there was a clear acknowledgement of the importance of NGOs in making Japanese aid visible. The following statement made by the government emphasises how NGOs were appreciated in developing countries, which also means it would be useful for the government to use their established strong reputation and popularity.

In response to requests for funds received from NGOs which are involved in aid activities in developing countries and those from local public bodies of developing countries to finance grass-roots projects, Japan's overseas diplomatic missions have quickly come up with grant aid tailored to meet their needs, and the visible aid activities in which these NGOs are engaged at the grass-roots level are highly appreciated by the people of developing countries.⁹⁴

The report also stated, "...economic and technical aids of private citizens and local public bodies can be extended through direct contacts at grass-roots level with developing countries, and the government should lend active support to such efforts from the standpoint of promoting visible aid."⁹⁵ NGOs' good reputations and visibility in the aid receiving countries have attracted the government's attention. Therefore, a budget for supporting NGOs was extended for their "widespread sympathy and high appreciation, here and abroad."⁹⁶

Having mentioned NGOs' importance in their official statements repeatedly, the

⁹⁴ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1994, 75.

⁹⁵ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1994, 92-93

⁹⁶ MOFA, 93.

Japanese government has tried other means to make its contribution visible. One was by hosting high-level international conferences in the early 1990s such as the Mongolian Assistance Group Meeting, the International Committee on Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia, the Comprehensive Development Forum on Indochina, and the International Conference on African Development. The other action taken by the government was the adoption of the Official Development Assistance Charter in 1992. This charter is regarded as Japan's aid philosophy, which Japan has been criticised for not having, and has been the basis of Japan's foreign aid programme since then. The next section addresses this Charter prior to analysing the "Visible Japanese Aid" policy.

"Official Development Assistance Charter"

Japan's aid philosophy, the Official Development Assistance Charter, was adopted in 1992. The rationale for this adoption was described as:

As a major economic power, Japan is obliged to meet the expectations placed on it by international society, and is working to increase the quantity and quality of its aid. An essential step in this process is to clearly set forth the concepts and principles pertaining to aid and to carry out this aid more effectively and efficiently. This will increase domestic and international understanding of these efforts, and help to secure a broad base of support.⁹⁷

Four points were made in the Charter as follows:

⁹⁷ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1992, 3.

- 1) Environmental Conservation and development should be pursued in tandem.
- 2) Any use of ODA for military purposes or for aggravation of international conflicts should be avoided.
- 3) Full attention should be paid to trends in recipient countries' military expenditures, their development and production of mass destruction weapons and missiles, their export and import of arms, etc., so as to maintain and strengthen international peace and stability, and from the viewpoint that developing countries should place appropriate priorities in the allocation of their resources in their own economic and social development.
- 4) Full attention should be paid to efforts in promoting democratization and the introduction of a market-oriented economy, and the situation regarding the securing of basic human rights and freedoms in the recipient country.⁹⁸

In the Charter, the government declared that Japan should pay close attention to the social development side of the aid projects. Based on this declaration, there was a clear shift in Japan's foreign aid. The shift was towards so-called 'Software aid' which NGOs have played important roles in implementing.

Conclusion: From Hardware to Software Aid: A shift in Japan's aid programme

"Software aid" was first introduced in the MOFA's aid annual report in 1995. It described the change from traditional aid to a new aim "to achieve the ultimate purpose of official development assistance to developing countries, development of human resources and institutional building is no less important than that for economic

⁹⁸ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1998, 151.

infrastructure.”⁹⁹ It also emphasised the importance of the “software” aspects of development, which are the “introduction of a parliamentary system, the judiciary, labour-management relations and the election system of Japan”¹⁰⁰. The aim of this is to promote the democratic process in the recipient country as well as the introduction of a market-oriented economy, and the creation of an agricultural cooperative system. One point to remember is that in this description of software aid, the term ‘good governance’, or ‘securing of basic human rights’ was avoided. So at this stage, although the government declared its change to a new line, this change was on purely technical matters.

Since the adoption of the ODA Charter, the Japanese government has been gradually responding to requests made by the international community in the early 1990s, exemplified by a decrease in the percentage of tied aid, which often is used as an indicator of aid quality. In 1993, the total bilateral ODA in Japan’s foreign aid consisted of 11 percent of the entire amount, which was the lowest amongst the five other top donors.¹⁰¹

As discussed earlier, Japan’s traditional strength in its foreign aid was economic infrastructure. Although the government declared it would shift the objective to software aid, infrastructure projects remained a major aid programme, as shown in the government’s “Three Balance” policy in 1994. The Three Balances are:

- 1) Maintaining a balance between the traditional type of aid and new types of aid;

⁹⁹ MOFA, Japan’s ODA 1994, 60.

¹⁰⁰ MOFA, 64.

¹⁰¹ Tomoko Fujisaki et al., “Japan as Top Donor: The Challenge of Implementing Software Aid Policy,” Pacific Affairs, Winter (1996/1997): 522.

- 2) Maintaining a balance between material (“hardware”) aid and human and institutional (“software”) aid;
- 3) Maintaining a balance between large-scale development projects and small-scale (grass roots) projects.¹⁰²

In this “Three Balances” policy, the “traditional type aid”, “material aid”, and “large-scale development projects” mean the same as economic infrastructure concentrated aid. In contrast, “new types of aid”, “human and institutional aid” and “small-scale projects” aim to develop new approaches towards newly arisen global issues such as the environment, population growth, HIV/AIDS and Women in Development (WID). This is accomplished through the improvement of human resources and the involvement of Japan’s own governmental and non-governmental bodies such as the Japan Overseas Volunteer Centre (JOVC) and NGOs.¹⁰³ The mix of conventional and new approaches to aid has clearly been shown in these three points, which explains the contradiction that the Japanese government faced.

As Fujisaki et al. (1996) mentions, although, “by depicting them as a matter of balance, the MOFA has both confirmed the conventional approach to hardware, large-scale development projects as a strength of Japan’s foreign assistance”¹⁰⁴, and the government “has expanded the scope of ODA to more ambitious and proactive approaches such as software and new types of aid.”¹⁰⁵

The increase in subsidies for NGOs can also be an indicator for changing from the hardware to the software aid policy line. Fujisaki et al. (1996) admits, “the

¹⁰² MOFA, Japan’s ODA 1994, 60.

¹⁰³ MOFA, 60.

¹⁰⁴ Fujisaki et al., “Japan as Top Donor: The Challenge of Implementing Software Aid Policy”, 526.

¹⁰⁵ Fujisaki et al., 526.

strengthened governmental support to NGOs is certainly a new and a positive change.”¹⁰⁶ However, he also argued that the subsidy does not cover what the NGOs really need, such as the cost for personnel and other recurrent costs.¹⁰⁷ This means that despite the government established partnership system for NGOs, its functional effectiveness is still questioned.

Answering this question, the next chapter will focus on the interactions between the Japanese government and NGOs. The main focus will be on how NGOs have made use of “official interactions” prepared by the government by going through each governmental cooperation scheme.

¹⁰⁶ Fujisaki at.el., 528.

¹⁰⁷ Fujisaki at el., 527.

Chapter 4

Interactions:

How do NGOs interact with the Japanese government?

4.1 Introduction: Various Interactions with Japanese NGOs

Japan's ODA started in the 1950s as part of the Colombo Plan. As the previous chapter noted, although starting as an aid receiving country, Japan had become one of the top donors of foreign aid by the 1990s. Yet, after receiving severe international criticism for its 'faceless' aid policy at the beginning of the 1990s, the Japanese government faced the need to create "Visible Japanese Aid (VJA)". This incorporated transparency and effectiveness in the aid strategy through cooperation with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).

To facilitate cooperation with NGOs, the Japanese government has established schemes to provide financial assistance and ways of institutionalisation for NGOs. They also became institutionalised via access to the aid decision-making process through sub-official meetings with the government such as NGO-ministries and aid agencies meetings. Yet, there is doubt that in practice NGOs are guaranteed the political access that the government has claimed. Many NGO related staff have stated that the cooperation system with the government is superficial, and in reality, they have been struggling to access central decision-making proceedings. As Rix states, "although the government wants to use NGOs as a convenient aid delivery vehicle and its providing high levels of subsidies and project funding, the attitude in Japan is still far from regarding the NGOs as partners in development projects".¹ On the other hand, it is also

¹ Alan Rix, Japan's Foreign Aid Challenge: Policy Reform and Aid Leadership, (London: Routledge, 1993), 70.

true that Japanese NGOs have been becoming more influential than ever in official aid policy, as has been demonstrated by many articles.²

This chapter focuses on Japanese NGOs' interactions with the government from the beginning of the 1990s. The objective is to analyse how Japanese NGOs sought to increase the influence on the government's aid decision-making process. These interactions are both official and unofficial. Official interactions were made by using the established institutionalised means, while the unofficial were through private means. The chapter will conclude with examples of Japanese NGOs' interactions with the Japanese government, which will be cases that the following chapters will examine.

4.2 Government's Cooperation System with NGOs: "Collaboration, Support and Close Dialogue"

Collaboration

Three main fields of cooperation with NGOs have been set up under the following titles: "Collaboration, Support and Close Dialogue". "Collaboration" introduced an idea of a '*Japan Platform*' by linking the government, business community and NGOs together to provide quicker and more effective emergency humanitarian relief such as disaster relief. Major overseas projects taken by the Japan Platform programme since its start include: assistance to Mongolia when it experienced heavy snow damage in 2000/2001; providing support to Western India after the 2001 earthquake, and reconstruction assistance to Afghanistan as well as assisting Afghan refugees (**Appendix 2: Figure 2**).

Although the Japan Platform has occupied a major part of "Collaboration", there are

² There are a number of authors who have written about the importance of Japanese NGOs in Japan's ODA. For example, Sumi (1989), Shiratori (1995), and JVC (2000). Takahashi (2004) has written especially about Japanese NGOs in Japan's official aid strategy in general terms.

some concerns regarding the system itself. Firstly, NGOs compete against each other to receive funding from this scheme. This can spoil the networks established among them. Secondly, NGO activities can be integrated into official aid activities to the detriment of NGOs' autonomy and independence. Thirdly, because the Japan Platform was designed to provide emergency relief, its area of operation has been limited.³ To increase the visibility of 'humanitarian relief' areas which require long-term assistance, such as improving living conditions and easing poverty, tend to be ignored.

Support

The "Support" scheme involves financial assistance. The government has described the subsidies as the "main pillars of the governmental NGO support scheme."⁴ In other words, it has said that the financial assistance is the mainstay of the government's cooperation with NGOs, rather than building cooperation systems for NGOs to obtain access to official decision-making.

There have been two major schemes of financial assistance available for NGOs: the NGO Project Subsidy (NPS) and the Grants for Grassroots Projects (GGP). The NPS was mainly for use by Japanese NGOs, while the GGP was available for local NGOs in aid receiving country. The budgets for these two financial assistance programmes have increased and there is little doubt that many NGOs have benefited from these resources.

Financial support has also been provided by other ministries: For example the Ministry of Post and Telecommunication has an 'International Volunteer Support' scheme, on which a number of NGOs rely, including some international agencies such

³ Mekata Mekata, ed. NGO Sekutaa ni Kannsuru Rokkakoku Hikaku Choosa: MDBs tonu Renkei ni Mukete (Comparative Analysis on NGO Sectors in 6 States: Toward a Cooperation with MDBs), (Keizai Sangyoo Kenkyuujyo, 2004) March 2004, p.189.

⁴ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), "Collaboration, Support, and Close Dialogue," n.d., <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/category/ngo/partnership.html#l>> (9 December 2003).

as United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP).

As stated in annual reports on Japan's ODA by the MOFA, Japanese NGOs are experiencing a range of financial problems. In order to support their financial basis as a part of the government's cooperation system, the MOFA and the MOF have established subsidies for NGOs. The MOFA, the ministry which provides the largest amount of subsidies to NGOs among ministries, has two main financial support schemes. As mentioned earlier, they are: **NGO Project Subsidies (NPS)** and **Grant for Grassroots Projects (GGP)**, both of which were established in 1989. This marked the beginning of NGO-Government financial cooperation. Before this, the "Japanese grant aid had been limited to the inter-governmental level."⁵

The government has used these financial subsidies as a tool to hold control over NGOs. In respect to the connection between governmental subsidies and NGOs, Baragouthi (1997) has stated, "northern NGOs are increasingly dependent on their governments for funds, and this in turn has resulted in a clear changing in the policies of these [Non-governmental organisations]"⁶ Japanese NGOs are no exception. What makes situations surrounding the Japanese NGOs worse is that in the Japanese government's funding scheme, later payment system. In this system, NGOs cannot receive repayment from the government until they complete their projects.

Since its start in 1989, the financial support scheme has experienced some changes. For example GGP has been divided into the 'Technical Cooperation for Grassroots Projects' and is mainly operated by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA),

⁵ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA), *Japan's ODA 1999*, (Tokyo: Association of Promotion for International Cooperation [APIC], 2000), 19. Although there was a small capital flow from the government to Japanese NGOs, it was a private scheme and not officially set up.

⁶ It was "organisation" in the original sentence but the author changed this to "Non-governmental organisations" in quotation to clarify the meaning. Refer to Mustafa Barghouthi, "North-South relations and the question of aid," in *Development and Patronage*, ed. Melakou Taegan and Debora Eade (London: Oxfam Great Britain, 1997), 69.

and partly to Grant Assistance for Japanese NGOs in 2002. A new financial support system for emergency relief was also set up in 1999 and evolved into the aforementioned Japan Platform (JPF) in 2000. The MOFA explained that these changes were for the enhancement of activities by Japanese NGOs and their capacity building.⁷

However, even though the scheme of financial support has encouraged this change, several problems remain. These include the lack of personnel interchange between official aid agencies and NGOs. This obstructs efforts to work for the common good. For instance, multiple windows of aid administration confuse funding and project applications. It may be concluded that this financial support system is meant to assist the government's ability to take advantage of the NGOs and control their autonomous activities. By tightening the purse's strings, the government is capable of holding control over NGOs by requiring them to impose "self-restriction" in order to obtain the government's approval for funding. The following section analyses each scheme for financial support and reveals several remaining problems, as well as examining how NGOs are trying to move away from the government's influence.

NGO Project Subsidies: "it will be reimbursed later"

The NGO Project Subsidies (NPS) programme started in 1989. It was the scheme under which "the government subsidises one half of the cost of development cooperation projects undertaken by Japanese NGOs in developing countries".⁸ However, it is important to note here, that it was not a 'matching fund' system as many other DAC countries have for their NGOs. The 'matching fund' system is when the

⁷ MOFA, ODA to NGO: Seifu to NGO kan no Renkei, Shien, Taiwa (ODA and NGO: Cooperation, Support and Consultation between the government and NGOs), (Tokyo: Minkan Enjyo Sienshitsu, 2003), 2.

⁸ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1996 (Tokyo: APIC, 1997), 184.

government subsidises NGOs twice the amount as the NGOs have earned. In Japan, the government supports NGOs by “not more than 50 percent”.⁹

The budget for this scheme started with 110 million JPN in 1989, but as it is one of two main financial support systems, it increased drastically to one billion JPY in 1996. However, it later decreased to 684 million JPY in 2000 due to the continued recession in Japan (**Appendix 2: Figure 3**)

In contrast with the Grant for Grassroots Project (GGP), this system is purely for use by the ‘Japanese’ NGOs. Considering this, it is important to note that since 1998 the scheme’s budget has continued to decline. In contrast, the GGS budget has increased with subsidies flowing directly to local NGOs in developing countries. This can be seen in “South-South cooperation”¹⁰, which literally means mutual help between entities in developing countries. In this context, the Japanese government has donated funds to local NGOs in developing countries to help the local people.

Under this cooperation scheme, it is also true that the Japanese government could control the flow of funds to local NGOs in developing countries by bypassing the Japanese NGOs, which used to play major roles in overseas projects. The direct fund flow to the local NGOs turn them into major players instead of Japanese NGOs. Two assumptions can be made from this point: firstly, it is by providing ODA to the local NGOs directly that the government can practise the “Visible Japanese Aid (VJA)” strategy by giving money under the name of the country. A crucial problem here is that there are many NGOs in developing countries wanting to receive foreign capital for their own sake but not for the sake of people in need. As described in the previous

⁹ Suzuka Yoshida, NGO ga Sekai wo Hiraku (NGOs open the world) (Tokyo: Aki Syobo, 1995), 185.

¹⁰ Japan’s ODA 1997 and Japan’s ODA 1998 have sections on “South-South Cooperation” in page 98 and page 84.

chapter, a divide between elite and non-elite in community can often be observed in developing countries. It is possible that the government could pay money to NGOs which were formed by elite groups intentionally to benefit themselves from donated aid. Secondly, the Japanese government is in a position to weaken NGOs by regulating their power by decreasing the financial support.¹¹

As repeatedly mentioned in the government's white paper, *Japan's ODA*, the prominent weakness of Japanese NGOs is financial. A lot of NGOs rely on governmental funding for their survival, especially after the 'economic bubble burst' when private business sectors were interested in providing financial support as a part of the 'philanthropic' trend.¹² With the decreasing aid budget the Japanese NGOs competed against each other over a smaller pie. In order to obtain a piece of the pie, NGOs can impose 'self-regulation' to gain the government's favour or preference. If the government is not satisfied with results from an NGO, its application for reimbursement can be rejected.

The other important feature of this scheme lies in the nature of projects that are to be funded. According to *Japan's ODA 1996*, projects that can be covered by the scheme are listed as follows;

- 1) "Agricultural and fishing village development projects (construction of livestock raising areas and construction of small-scale irrigation facilities.)
- 2) Manpower development projects (construction of schools and libraries, literacy education, etc.)

¹¹ Mikimasa Yoshida, ed., NGO no Genzai- Kokusai Kyooryoku Katsudoo no Genjyoo to Kadak (Current situation of NGOs: Issues in international cooperation activities), (Tokyo: Asia Keizai Kenkyuujo, 1997), 7.

¹² The 'Philanthropic' trend involved the business sector practicing its social responsibility in society when they make profit out of the society. It has become a trend since the 1980s.

- 3) Health and hygiene projects (construction of simple toilets, nutritious meals programs for pregnant women and infants.)
- 4) Medical care projects (construction of clinics in outlying areas, travelling clinics.)
- 5) Improvement of local industry projects (construction of vocational training centres and industrial promotion facilities.)
- 6) Improvement of living environment projects (construction of wells, construction of living condition improvement centres.)
- 7) Environmental conservation projects (afforestation.)
- 8) Projects for hauling private aid goods, and projects for transferring and disseminating development cooperation techniques (seminars and workshops on development cooperation techniques.)”¹³

Most of these categories involve ‘construction’. The government has stated that NGO project subsidies are meant to support software aid. In contrast, the Grant for Grassroots Projects (GGP) concentrates on hardware aid.¹⁴ However, projects related to software aid only occur in the eighth category in the form of ‘seminars and workshops’. From a NGO perspective, a ‘construction’ project means a huge budget. This was especially difficult for NGOs with lower amounts of self-funding and a small number of staff in terms of implementing such projects.

The main problem in this scheme is that it is operated on a ‘later payment’ system. Also, governmental subsidies are only allowed to be spent on the projects themselves, and not on administration costs such as personnel, on which NGOs typically spend a lot

¹³ MOFA, Japan’s ODA 1996, (Tokyo: APIC, 1997), 184.

¹⁴ MOFA, Japan’s ODA 2000, (Tokyo: APIC, 2001), 298.

to maintain highly-trained staff.

This financial assistance can be an effective mean for the government to take control over NGOs.¹⁵ The ‘later payment’ system has two drawbacks for NGOs. Firstly, it restricts the actions of NGOs to ‘self-regulation’ in order to obtain reimbursement from the government after projects are already finished. This is because the government will only repay NGOs upon receipt of the submission of final reports of already finished projects.¹⁶ Yamamoto (1995) laments, “payment is received from the government only after a project is finished,...Therefore, NGOs have to have enough funds to carry out projects before receiving reimbursements from the government.”¹⁷ In cases where the government is unsatisfied with achievements, repayment requests can be rejected. The other drawback is that NGOs have to accomplish projects without actual financial support. They only have the government’s promise of repayment. Therefore NGOs are frequently forced to complete projects to a lesser quality than they would ideally like due to this financial reality.¹⁸

Grants for Grassroots Projects (GGP): direct funding for local NGOs in developing countries

A second financial support scheme consists of the Grant for Grassroots Projects (GGP). It started as ‘Small-Scale Grant Assistance’ in 1989, and was renamed in 1995.

According to Japan’s ODA 1999, the stated aim of this support system is that the: “GGP serves as a framework for financial assistance to economic and social

¹⁵ Michiya Kumaoka, interviewed by the author, 24 June 2003.

¹⁶ Maki Hasegawa, interviewed by the author, 15 March, 2003.

¹⁷ Tadashi Yamamoto, ed., Emerging Civil Society in the Asia Pacific Community: Nongovernmental Uprisings of the Emerging Asia Pacific Regional Community: a 25th Anniversary Project of Japan Center for International Exchange (JCIE), (Tokyo: JCIE, 1995), 152.

¹⁸ Hideaki Ishii, interviewed by the author, 15 October, 1999.

development projects implemented by NGOs, local government, and research and medical institutions that take an active part in developing countries.”¹⁹ As indicated in the graph (**Appendix 2: Figure 4**), the budget for this scheme keeps increasing.

The difference between this grant and NGO Project Subsidies (NPS) was that it was not only aimed at supporting ‘Japanese’ NGOs, but also local NGOs in developing countries. In fact, a large share of the aid went to local NGOs, which accounted for forty three percent of the total NGOs, and Japanese NGOs only received four percent in 1998.²⁰

Under the GGP scheme, embassies or agencies in developing countries may receive applications for projects. The embassies and agencies themselves are in charge of the project selection and the decision-making. Projects which can be covered by this support system are described as follows:

The largest share of GGP funding goes to projects in the education and research fields, such as the construction and repair of elementary school classrooms. This is followed by projects in the fields of health and medical care and social infrastructure and environment. The former include the provision of medical equipment for hospitals, hospital ward construction and improvement of mother and child health care.²¹

It is clear that “construction” is important in this grant, which is similar to the NPS scheme. Embassies try to distribute grant aid evenly among the above fields. However, medical care applications, which seem more like emergency relief as it has usually been

¹⁹ MOFA, Japan’s ODA 1999, (Tokyo: APIC, 2000), 19.

²⁰ MOFA, 24.

²¹ MOFA, 24.

related to natural disasters, were preferred above the other fields by the Japanese government.²²

These two subsidy schemes clearly showed the intention of the Japanese government to utilise NGOs as government vehicles. The Japanese NGOs have been manipulated due to the decrease in the budget, the 'later payment system', and 'preferred' projects for funding. However, the Japanese NGOs fought back against the government by making full use of 'interactions' that will be described in a later section.

Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects

The Japanese government established a new scheme of financial support for NGOs in 2002, called **Grant Assistance for Japanese NGO Projects**. The result and impact of this new scheme is yet to be examined due to its short history. Only a brief overview will be given here. This grant is an integrated form of the existing GGP and a part of financial assistance for NGOs in emergency relief activities and allows a spent on administration cost of NGOs, which was not permitted by other financial subsidy systems such as NPS and GGP. In return, NGOs which receive this assistance are obliged to accept external auditing for all their applicable projects. Therefore, NGOs are required to provide accountability and transparency to the outside.²³ This system secures healthy organisational management of them at the end, which are often questioned for their secretive nature.

²² An anonymous MOFA official, interviewed by the author, 17 August 2002.

²³ MOFA, Japan's ODA 2002, (Tokyo: APIC, 2003), 116-117.

Close Dialogue

The last scheme, “Close Dialogue”, aims to foster close dialogue between the government and NGOs to generate better aid practice. Under this scheme, the NGO-MOFA Regular Meeting and the NGO-Embassy Meeting are held regularly with other aid agencies participating. There is also other dialogue with aid implementing agencies such as Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) (MOFA’s jurisdiction). Attempts to open this dialogue were seen not only with MOFA, but also with other aid implementing entities as well, such as the regular meetings between NGOs and the Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC) (under MOF jurisdiction).

In addition to these actual support schemes, a clear indication of the cooperation with NGOs appeared in numerous official documents and declarations, such as the ODA Charter which was adopted in 1992 as a guideline for Japan’s foreign aid. While respecting NGOs’ independence, this encouraged cooperation with NGOs as well as other aid agencies such as the United Nations²⁴. Another example, the Medium-Term Policy on ODA adopted in August 1999, mentioned the importance of establishing cooperation with NGOs as well as appropriately utilising their resources²⁵. The MOFA started up a special support section under its jurisdiction to assist in the cooperation with NGOs, the *Minkan-Kyoryoku Suishin Shitsu* (or the NGO Activities Promoting Room within the Economy Planning Agency [EPA]). In addition, the MOF also integrated two different aid agencies into one agency, the Japan Bank of International Cooperation (JBIC) in 2001 for more effective aid implementation. This agency is to conduct Japan’s Yen Loan projects.

²⁴ MOFA, Japan’s ODA 2001, (Tokyo: APIC, 2002), 119 (Japan’s Official Development Assistance Charter, 4. Measures for the Effective Implementation of Official Development Assistance).

²⁵ MOFA, 140.

Are They Really Cooperative?

On the basis of these positive and encouraging official claims, it would appear the cooperation between the Japanese government and NGOs was ‘improving’ through the system of enhanced cooperation. Apparently, while the ‘change’ has appeared in the relationship in the new systems, there remains doubt as to whether the change is actually ‘improving’ the system, or merely ‘old wine in a new bottle’.

It is suggested here that analysis of the governmental documents and statements can be misleading and possibly one-sided. Mitsuhiro Saotome, of the MOFA, has stated that, “the Japanese government has been expanding its support for NGOs in terms of enhancing organisational structures as well as their finance.”²⁶ However, in the author’s interviews with some NGO personnel that are receiving ‘governmental support’, dissatisfaction with the Japanese government has been clearly indicated.

For instance, as has been mentioned, the financial assistance budget for NGOs increased if the two schemes, NPS and GGP, were seen as one. When looking at the budgets of these two schemes separately, it is obvious that the budget for GGS was increased while that of the NPS was decreased. Considering who were eligible to receive these two subsidies, it can be said that the Japanese government has favoured funding directly local NGOs in aid receiving countries rather than enhancing Japanese NGOs budgets. This contrast with what was happening under the “South-South Cooperation” system. However, the fund has bypassed Japanese NGOs but flew directly to local NGOs in developing countries.

The “later payment system” that meant funding was provided upon completion of the project was a critical issue in the way in which subsidies were implemented under

²⁶ Mitsuhiro Saotome, “Role of NGO/NPO in Japan’s ODA”, Kokusai Mondai (International Affairs) 517 (2003): 69.

this system. Even though the funding was approved, the NGOs had to fund a project by themselves until they were repaid by the government, so the financial burden remained as the NGOs' own problem. In order to receive the repayment NGOs increased 'self-restriction'. This meant that NGOs adopted behaviour favourable to the government in their projects.

The most frequent cause of discontent from the NGOs was a lack of 'institutionalised interaction' with the government, which is defined as official access to the decision-making process to consider their opinions in aid policy. While other Northern/Western NGOs enjoy their institutionalised status (such as attending governmental conferences or being invited as part of official envoys), Japanese NGOs do not have official access to the government's decision-making process. Meanwhile dialogue between them could be possible as one MOFA official states, "We are eager to listen to outside voice. It is, however, left to bureaucracy whether they would be referred or not into actual policy forming".²⁷

Having said this, the Japanese NGOs have their own ways of putting pressure on the government concerning foreign aid issues. However, the Japanese government also uses these interactions to control NGOs. The author defines this as 'unofficial interaction'. In order to reveal the substantive meaning of the NGOs' participation in their usage of unofficial interactions in Japan's foreign aid, this chapter will address the claims of both the government and NGOs in terms of their 'cooperation'.

4.3 Interactions: Taking advantage of established systems

From the existing NGO study and several pieces of field research, five major types

²⁷ A section manager of MOFA, letter to Satoru Matsumoto, quoted in Satoru Matsumoto, Mekong-Gawa Kaihatsu: 21 Seiki no Kaihatsu Enjyo (Mekong River Development: Development Assistance in 21st Century), (Tokyo: Tsukiji Syokan, 1997), 177.

of interactions between NGOs and the government in Japan can be observed.²⁸ They are: ‘Meeting’ type interaction, ‘Workshop’ or ‘Symposium’ type interaction, ‘Personal Relation’ type interaction, ‘Network’ and ‘Petition’ type interaction, and ‘Media Cooperation’ type interaction. The following sections will closely examine each of these interaction types. By doing so, this chapter will present the indicators for analysing case studies of this thesis.

‘Meeting’ interaction type

Both official and unofficial meetings have been used by both the government and the NGOs to exert influence on each other. The government has established some institutional cooperation schemes for NGOs, stating that, “to forge equal partnerships between the government and NGOs through the exchange of opinions between the two sides concerning the state of international cooperation and how it can be improved.”²⁹ The two main aid conducting ministries, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Ministry of Finance (MOF), have started holding regular meetings with NGOs since the mid-1990s. This scheme constituted part of “Close Dialogue”, which has already been discussed.

One point to make here, is that the financial support system (which will be discussed later) started in 1989, but the institutional cooperation scheme had to wait for its establishment until the mid-1990s. The government has not made any comments with regard to this. However, it could be assumed that the emergence of NGOs was accelerated in the mid-1990s. It is common knowledge among the scholars that the year 1995 was the epoch-making year for Japanese NGOs when people came to realise the

²⁸ Other interactions may exist, but when restricted to interactions within Japan (i.e. excluding Japanese NGOs activities overseas), these five comprise the main interaction types.

²⁹ MOFA, Japan’s ODA 1996 (Tokyo: APIC, 1997), 186.

importance and effectiveness of NGOs. However, Kawano (2004) conducted research and found out that the number of articles on Japanese NGOs drastically increased after 1993.³⁰ Nevertheless, 1995 is still considered to be the most important year for the emergence of Japanese NGOs'. The biggest reason for this is that in 1995, NGOs' effective and nimble activities at the Great Hanshin Earthquake caught public attention, which was in vivid contrast to the late arrival of the government's rescue teams. In addition to the Great Hanshin Earthquake, NGOs' rescue activities at an oil leak disaster in the Sea of Japan in 1997 also won public attention and recognition.³¹ These two major incidents, the earthquake and oil tanker accident in the mid-1990s, altered the government's attitude toward collaboration with NGOs, not only financially, but institutionally as well. However, the government has not wanted NGOs' participation too much, so the introduction of institutional cooperation was delayed compared with financial support.

The drastic change of the government's attitude toward NGO participation in aid during the 1990s shows two sides of its strategy. One side reflects international criticism of Japan's "faceless" ODA. The Japanese government intended to utilise the NGOs as a 'name-carrier' for their activities at a grassroots level in developing countries because the Japanese NGOs had already gained a good reputation from their activities with the local people. The other side is an inward strategy aiming to 'legitimise' the government's aid activities. After the failure in the above two incidents, engaging NGOs into its new aid policy was essential for the government's popularity and efficiency. At the same time, the government has provided an arena for Japanese

³⁰ Masao Tao and Yuji Kawano, Boranthiya - NPO no Soshiki-ron: Hieiri no Keiei wo Kangaeru (Organisational theory of Voluntary and NPO: to think about management of NPO), (Tokyo: Gakuyo Syobo, 2004), 31.

³¹ Asahi Newspaper, "Nahotoka Disaster", Sea Accidents in the Past, n.d., <<http://mytown.asahi.com/toyama/news02asp?c=11kiji=191>>. (15 October 2003).

NGOs to grow stronger by establishing an institutional cooperation system.

Based on these strategies, regular meetings held by the two ministries and other aid implementing agencies under their jurisdiction have taken place. There have been active exchanges of opinions between the NGOs and the government officials. From the government's perspective, regular meetings ensure the transparency and legitimacy of Japan's foreign aid. From the NGOs perspective, regular meetings provided opportunities to express their concerns and ideas. Hirata (2002) remarks:

The policy dialogue between NGOs and MOFA/JICA staff have created an environment where both parties listen to each other and learn about their different beliefs...In other words, these policy dialogues allow NGOs to gain many points of access to policy making – an important character of pluralism.³²

It seems both sides enjoyed the benefit of holding these meetings. However, it is important to note that these meetings are open to the public and this possibly makes them be less serious than those held exclusively with decision-makers.³³ There are no promises that any of the opinions or ideas that come from these people will actually be institutionally taken into account in aid policy-making. Although there are some exceptions, these are few compared to the number of meetings.

In this section, two objectives are set for analysis. The first addresses how influential these regular meetings are on Japan's ODA. The second addresses how Japanese NGOs are making use of the unofficial interaction to put pressure on the

³² Keiko Hirata, "Whither the Development State? The Growing Role of NGOs in Japanese Aid Policy Making," *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis* 4, no. 3 (2002): 25.

³³ Michiya Kumaoka, interviewed by author, 30 June 2003.

government.

NGO-MOFA Quarterly Meeting

MOFA's explanation for cooperating with NGOs is given as follows: "Cooperation has also reached the point where NGO's specialised knowledge is being made available for official aid activities."³⁴ On this point, it is clear that the government's cooperation with NGOs was more for the government's good than for realising partnerships with them.

NGOs - MOFA quarterly meetings started in 1996, right after the Great Hanshin Earthquake. There are also plenary meetings and two subcommittees in addition to the regular meetings that provide other opportunities for communication. At the conferences, agendas from the four subordinated committees are confirmed. The four subordinated committees each have special focuses such as "consultation for ODA policy", and "NGO activities support and encouragement". The MOFA mentioned that these meetings, committees and conferences have been promoting interactions between the government and NGOs.³⁵

On the other hand, there was a different viewpoint from the NGOs side. Michiya Kumaoka of Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC) mentioned at the second meeting in 2001, that "too few efficient results have been drawn from meetings for times and hours we have spent."³⁶ He has also shown his suspicion of the back door relationships between the MOFA and particular NGOs in receiving subsidies; that is,

³⁴ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1998, (Tokyo: APIC, 1999), 77.

³⁵ MOFA, "the governmental support for NGOs", MOFA's cooperation for NGOs, n.d., <http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/seisaku/seisaku_4/sei_4.html> (20 May 2003).

³⁶ Japanese NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC), "NGO-the MOFA meetings Gijiroku (NGO-the MOFA Meetings Records)", n.d., <<http://www.janic.org/res/teikikyogikai2001-2.html>> (20 July 2003).

whether there have been any “secret promises made”.³⁷ The MOFA officials at the meeting denied this. However, it is important to note that as there were *doubts* posed by a NGO. It can be assumed that there *was* something that prompted them. The suspicion of a secret linkage between the MOFA and some particular NGOs has affected relations between the Japanese NGO community. As stated by Donowaki (1999), competition among NGOs is getting harder.³⁸ Hirata (2004) regarded this phenomenon as “partisan battles”.³⁹ There are now more than 400 NGOs seeking official subsidies. Michiya Kumaoka has said that in the 1980s, his leading NGO, JVC, was able to obtain funds from the Japanese government with ease for there were few competitors. However in the 1990s, obtaining official funds became difficult for JVC as it faced competition from other powerful NGOs.⁴⁰ Any suspicion of secret deals such as indicated earlier, could be obstructive to building cooperation among the NGO community.

The outputs and suggestions from these meetings have indicated some changes in the government’s policies on NGOs. These changes include expanding the amount of GGP; and implementing the joint evaluation in October and November 1997 of an ODA programme in Bangladesh.⁴¹ This was the first joint action to evaluate past projects. Another example of output from these meetings was a new financial assistance scheme for NGOs, Grant Assistance for Japanese NGOs Projects, which was mentioned earlier under “Support”.⁴² The idea came from the meeting and it was discussed at these meetings several times and was released in 2002.

As a whole, however, issues at meetings have appeared vague and lack definite

³⁷ JANIC, 20 July 2003. .

³⁸ Mitsuro Donowaki, Introduction to Preventive Diplomacy, (Tokyo: Japan International Forum, 1999), Chapter 3.

³⁹ Keiko Hirata, “Civil Society and Japan’s Dysfunctional Democracy,” Journal of Developing Societies 20, no.1-2 (2004): 19

⁴⁰ Michiya Kumaoka, interviewed by the author, 24 June 2003.

⁴¹ MOFA, Japan’s ODA 2000, 77.

⁴² MOFA, Plaza for International Cooperation 94, April (2002): 4.

plans when compared with those of the NGO - MOF meetings on bilateral aid. At the meetings, NGO participants and the MOFA officials have talked about how their partnership ought to be realised such as through ‘building equal relationships’. However they have not talked about each project as they have at the NGO - MOF meetings.

Murai (2002) casts doubt about the transparency of NGO-MOFA meetings as the government claims, especially in terms of its selection of NGOs. He does not deny that the meetings are efficient but adds, “it is unclear who is in charge of selecting NGOs for participation by what measure”.⁴³ Kiyotaka Takahashi, a NGO person on policy advocacy issues, says that NGOs with a different attitude towards ODA than the government’s were rarely chosen to take part in the meetings. The government makes no mention of this.⁴⁴ Specifically on this respect, NGOs themselves are inclined to frame their activities by ‘self-regulation’ in order to be chosen by the government as participants. This ‘self-regulation’ is also evident in accessing and obtaining the governmental funding, which will be discussed in the next section.

The Japanese government gives no evidence regarding its NGOs selection according to preference, but there is circumstantial evidence to prove the government’s intention. It has already been discussed in this thesis several times, but suspicion surrounding the selection of NGOs at the International Conference on Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan could explain the attitude of the government toward NGOs. The details have not been given at this point, but the government did not allow Peace Winds Japan to participate in the conference as it was reasoned that its director has an unfavourable opinion about the governmental policy.⁴⁵ As Murai (2002) comments, it is easy to

⁴³ Yoshinori Murai, “Watashi tachi no Teigen (Policy Advocacy for ODA legislation),” in ODA wo do Kaereba iinoka (How should we change Japanese ODA), ed. Yasushi Fujiwara and Rie Nagase, (Tokyo: Commons, 2002), 268-269.

⁴⁴ Kiyotaka Takahashi, interviewed by the author, 22 April 2003.

⁴⁵ For details of the incident, see Katsuhiro Harada, Document: NGO Kyohi, Gaimusyo, Suzuki

apply this to the NGO-MOFA meeting's selection process.

Establishing institutional support for NGOs was nevertheless important and a promotion of the partnership between NGOs and the government. Before 1996, there were no joint meetings among them, except for the exchange of private opinions. Therefore, NGO-MOFA Regular Meetings and other similar meetings can be highly-valued. However, as long as the government holds the power in selecting attendance, NGOs have to play within the rules set by the government. The balance of power is still in favour of the government and far from a 'partnership' relationship, which is meant to be an equal balance of power.

NGO-the MOF Quarterly Meetings

The start of the NGO - MOF meetings has involved one politician, which forms a part of the "Iron Triangle" system. In February 1997, MP Tadatoshi Akiba and a NGO exchanged views on the decision-making process of Japan's bilateral loan within the Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs),⁴⁶ and accountability of the MOF in relation to aid. After the exchange, MP Akiba argued strongly for having regular meetings to exchange opinions with the MOF regularly at the *Zaimu Inkai* (Finance Committee) and obtain positive feedback from the MOF officials.⁴⁷ MP Akiba insisted that having regular meetings would secure the "Accountability of the Japanese government".⁴⁸ Before then, the position or the strategy of the Japanese government in MDBs had been

Muneo tonou Koubo 90 nichi (True Story of Rejection of the NGO, 90 days of conflicts against the MOFA and Muneo Suzuki), (Tokyo: Gendai Jinbunsha, 2002).

⁴⁶ Ministry of Finance (MOF), "MDBs Division," Japan's Effort to MDBs, n.d., <http://www.mof.go.jp/mdbs/p2002_01.htm> (3 August 2003).

⁴⁷ Japan Center for Sustainable Environment and Society (JACSES), "Hossoku made no Haikei to Keii (Background of Establishing Meetings)," Teiki Kyogikai no Rekishi (History of MOFA-NGO regular meetings), n.d., <<http://www.jacses.org/sdap/mof/background.html>> (25 July 2003).

⁴⁸ Refer to JACSES website for more information. JACSES <<http://jacses.org/sdap/mof/background.html>>, (9 December 2005).

private. The MOF influences the Yen Loan in ODA (Refer **Chapter 3:** 68), so NGOs were eager to observe and make comments to the MOF in order to put pressure on what they consider, ‘unsuitable’ projects. The establishment of the regular meetings created an arena for NGOs to express their concerns.

The meetings were open to the public, and have occurred on a regular basis, there being 21 up to February 2003. The meetings were three hour sessions, held four times a year and began in April 1997. Each agenda for the meetings was influenced by important contemporary issues such as the financial crisis in Asia in 1997, the integration of OECF and the Japan Export and Import Bank (Exim Bank) in 1998, both of which were bilateral aid-related agencies of the MOF, and the ADB Annual Meeting in 2000. Apart from these issues at the macro level, a number of queries and opinions were made by NGOs in terms of several Yen Loan projects, for example; Namtun Dam, the second hydro plant issue (NT2) of Laos since 1997, which some NGOs considered ‘unsuitable’.

In comparison with NGO - MOFA regular meetings, which often have been vague and ineffective despite the length of time spent on them by the NGOs’ side, as noted at the second meeting in 2001.⁴⁹ The NGO - MOF Meetings have considered concrete issues posed by both sides.

NGOs’ participation in the decision-making processes is as follows; NGOs suggested an inspection panel in JBIC in reference to the World Bank in the 20th Meeting; requested information disclosure and NGO’s participation in setting environmental guidelines of ODA projects in the 10th Meeting; and NGOs requested an explanation of how ‘public comment’ was taken into account in setting the guidelines in

⁴⁹ JANIC, “NGO-the MOFA Meeting Gijiroku (NGO-the MOFA Meeting Records),” <<http://www.janic.org/res/tekikyogikai2001-2.html>> (3 August 2003).

comparison with the World Bank in the 17th Meeting. Issues have also been raised on Japan's bilateral loan system itself; and NGOs criticised the increase of the 'tied' rate since 1997, raising suspicion at the MITI's (renamed the Ministry of Electricity, Trade and Industry: METI since 2001) intention to favour Japanese firms in the 7th Meeting.⁵⁰ In the 5th Meeting, a representative of Mekong Watch, an environmental advocacy NGO, made a comment on the government's so-called "participatory approach" research on ODA project. It was said that with the presence of government officials, the true opinion of village residents would not be heard for fear of getting into trouble later.⁵¹ Not only was there pressure on the government, but also the participation of NGOs has allowed the government to obtain information from the grassroots level.

'Workshop' or 'Symposium' interaction type

As the Japanese government has made regular meetings 'open to the public' to scale down their impact, NGOs have organised 'workshops' or symposiums with the participation of government officials. The aim is to make the discussion agendas more public and eye-catching than the government's expectation.

In the 1990s, many workshops and symposiums on aid issues were held by both the government and NGOs. The government has held meetings on environment issues, "Peace Building" schemes for conflict-stricken areas such as Cambodia, Africa and Afghanistan, and the banning of landmines issue. NGOs also have chaired symposiums in the 1990s on similar issues.

The tactics of NGOs in holding these workshops and symposiums lie in making them

⁵⁰ JACSES, "Gijiroku (NGO-the MOF regular meetings mandates)," Kako no Gijiroku (Mandates in the past), n.d., <<http://www.jacses.org/sdap/mof/gijiroku/mof07.txt>> (4 August 2003).

⁵¹ Mekong Watch Japan, ed., Development, Environment and Human Rights in Burma/Myanmar – Examining the Impact of ODA and Investment (Tokyo: Mekong Watch Japan, 2001), 7.

public to put pressure on the government, by making them ‘open to the public’ and updating records to the public. Hirata explains it as, “In order to pressure Japan’s aid programs to improve, they held seminars and meetings and frequently appeared in the media, exposing ODA failures, corruption, mismanagement, and misuse of funds.”⁵² Thanks to improvement in media technology, NGOs are able to publicise coming workshops and symposiums effectively, which used to be limited to people eager to be involved. Updating records of workshops and symposiums straight after them also have provided people with less interest easier to access to the issues. Their low cost has helped NGOs facing financial difficulties.

The difference between NGO workshops and symposiums and those of the government lies in the time they are held. Usually, the government set regular meetings of NGOs - MOFA, NGOs - MOF, NGOs - JICA and - JBIC starting at 1 o’clock in the afternoon on weekdays. For example, JICA’s meeting started at 1:10 pm on Monday with participants from academics, the MOFA, governmental consultants, and the NGO field. Records of the regular meetings have shown clear typology of participants: the MOFA officials, MPs and NGO personnel. The early time on weekdays is inconvenient for ordinary people, such as those working at companies and shops or busy with household work. Thus, even if people are much interested and have the will to attend participation is not possible. Naturally, possible participants are limited to people in governmental occupations, academics, and NGOs, whom the government considers either *friends* or *competitors*, which do not represent *ordinary voters*. Conversely, workshops and symposiums held by NGOs usually start around 6:30 or 7:00 in the evening. An example is, the “ODA meeting” by ODA-NET which people are able to

⁵² Keiko Hirata, “Wither the Development State? The Growing Role of NGOs in Japanese Aid Policy Making”, 20.

attend after work.⁵³ If they are held at mid-day, they are on weekends.

The NGOs' tactics also aim to put pressure on the government through influencing the governmental officials when attend. There is usually discussion and question time among participants, and attending governmental officials are required to answer any questions posed. Knowing records will be open to the public, officials are unable to ignore questions. Moreover, when they leave in the middle of sessions, to avoid being questioned it leaves suspicion among other participants that the government has something to hide. All four NGOs that are to be analysed in the following case studies have held these workshops and symposiums.

‘Personal Relation’ interaction type

Historically, Japanese domestic politics have been dominated by the sentimental attitude of people in power, as is in the case in most countries. In other words, a policy change is likely if one can impress high-power decision-makers. This so-called “Naniwa-bushi” is deeply rooted in the Japanese culture, and often appears in both traditional and contemporary literature and drama.

Japan's aid policy decision-making is no exception. It has been affected by high-powered people. However, the phenomena can work in positive and negative ways. On the negative side, the 2001 incident involving the former MP of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), Japan's long time ruling party, is a clear example. MP Muneo Suzuki indicated that he wished the MOFA to refuse one NGO's participation at the conference on rebuilding Afghanistan hosted by the Ministry because of his personal discontent with the organisation. This NGO was actually one of the best emergency

⁵³ Having said this, Japanese workers tend to work longer times due to the economy recession or fear of restructuring. Still, it is much easier to attend than during lunch time on weekdays.

relief NGOs in terms of self-finance and project handling. Apart from that, the director of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) had a long history of being selected from retired MOFA officials so as to provide second opportunities for obtaining a high-salary and social position after their early retirement.⁵⁴ Retired MOFA officials usually have a strong relationship with the home ministry even after they have left. Therefore, JICA has been keen to obtain the governmental agency's favour before it obtains public support in its aid projects. As can be seen, the worst drawback here lies in obstructing effective aid policy implementation. According to JICA officials, there have been a number of 'doubtful' acceptances of aid applications that could be affected by an individual Ambassador or powerful politicians.⁵⁵

This culture can also work well for NGOs by creating opportunities. An example is the case of Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL), which will be discussed in **Chapter 6**. Analysis will not be provided here. Other than the mine issue, the Cambodian case should be included. Yasushi Akashi, a Japanese UN staff member was in charge of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), and the Japanese government eagerly participated in peace building activities in Cambodia during the 1990s. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has also received large donations from the Japanese government. That was because Sadako Ogata was the commissioner for the organisation. According to Takeda (2002): "Ogata was a Japanese appointee to the position of UNHCR commissioner and that the Japanese government, including its foreign ministry, created a system to provide her with its full support. In that sense, Ogata diplomacy can be seen as an extension of

⁵⁴ In August 2003 JICA made the major change in its organisational structure. After being independent from the MOFA (so-called *Dokuritsu Gyosei Hojin*, an autonomous administration body), Sadako Ogata was appointed a new director. She is the first director chosen from non-MOFA retirees.

⁵⁵ JICA ha Dokuritsu dekirunoka? (Can JICA be independent)?" *Asahi Simbun*, 19 June 2003:4.

Japan's foreign policy.”⁵⁶

Much of both inward and outward policies of Japan, including international aid strategy, has been affected by people in power. It is considered that Japan itself does not have a principle for its behaviours so it is possible to move the government to a direction desired by influential outside groups. They even make use of people's pure sympathy, if necessary.

‘Network’ and ‘Campaign’ interaction type

As NGOs are too small by themselves, they have traditionally tried to build networks within and beyond their borders in order to exert more influence and launch larger activities. This is not only applicable to Japanese NGOs but also to other NGOs in the world as well, especially in Asia.⁵⁷ The networking works both positively and negatively and the following case studies illustrate this interaction. Therefore, this section will provide only a general understanding of this interaction.

The importance of a domestic network lies in information sharing and forming a bigger influential group. Naturally, the larger the number of participating NGOs, the more they can operate activities to influence by their sheer force of numbers. A problem here though is that, when there are too many leaders in one group the group tends to lose its unified objective and be easily fragmented. In addition, it is often hard to achieve a unified objective among a lot of groups with different interests and aims.

Building an international network is a crucial aspect which Japanese NGOs can

⁵⁶ Isami Takeda, “Humanitarian Aid Diplomacy: From Cambodia to Afghanistan,” *Gaiko Forum* 2, no.2, (2002): 23.

⁵⁷ Vincent Kelly Pollard, *Globalisation, Democratisation and Asian Leadership: Power Sharing. Foreign Policy and Society in the Philippines and Japan*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 150. Pollard mentioned importance of networking between NGOs in Asian countries and used the Philippines as a case study.

create that through their international counterparts. There are many branches of powerful international NGOs located in Japan such as Oxfam Japan, CARE Japan, Amnesty International Japan, the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Japan, Greenpeace Japan, and Friends of the Earth (FoE) Japan. A third case study of this thesis focuses on two environmental NGOs listed above to analyse the advantages and disadvantages of being branches of stronger international NGOs.

Apart from these branches with international origins, some locally established Japanese NGOs try to connect to international NGOs in order to gain outside support, to learn their efficient operational strategies and to hold joint campaigns. The following three case studies show the advantages of relating to each other internationally but they also show some issues can arise from working too closely to powerful and stronger international organisations.

Frequently, this 'Network' type interaction involves 'campaign' type activities when several NGOs, Northern/Western and Southern/Asian NGOs, jointly launch campaigns on issues such as human rights, poverty, trade, and the environment. Often, 'campaign' type activities are described as part of lobbying activities. Those come under 'personal relationship' type interaction in this thesis because a major campaign activity is to influence decision-makers through motivating public populations.⁵⁸ However, this thesis defines 'campaign' as a mobilisation of populations led by NGOs on issues such as development through public appeals such as the demonstration of public opinion, and petition.

As stated earlier, a petition is an important campaign activity to facilitate the presentation of public opinion on issues. NGOs jointly working on issues often jointly

⁵⁸ See John Clark "Policy influence, lobbying and advocacy" in Making a difference: NGOs and development ed. by Michael Edwards and David Hulme (London: Earthscan, 1992). This examined the linkage between lobbying and campaign.

launch public petitions. This is simply because the larger the size of petitions, the larger the impact of the petition. It is important to note here that this petition type activity is not only used by NGOs against the government's decision but also used by others who oppose NGO opinions. This is illustrated by the trade issue. The Chamber of Commerce sometimes believes NGO opinion defending the local benefits in developing countries is an obstacle to its trade promotion.

'Media Cooperation' interaction type

There is no doubt the media has the power to influence public opinion. One prominent example is the Kosovo war where an American public relations firm used all media tools to visualise positives or negatives by using a created term, "ethnic cleansing".⁵⁹ By doing so, it is partly true that this PR firm contributed a lot to influencing where 'justice' lay in the conflict.

Taking advantage of the media's power, almost all NGOs have their own media strategies, regardless of their size. Those international NGOs, especially groups about the environment, have their own publications which are a strong tool of advocacy, as well as having their own internet homepages which provide a direct link to the public. Many of these websites are well-made so as to catch attention. Through publications, NGOs can provoke interest, popularity, and a basis for encouraging pressure on central governments.

Japanese NGOs often use the media efficiently as well. It is well known that Japan's ODA issue itself drew strong public attention through some publications by scholars at the beginning of the 1990s. One of the following case studies will clearly show how

⁵⁹ Refer to Tohru Takagi, Document Sensoo Koukoku Dairiten: Jyohoo Soosa to Bosnia Funsoo (Document-War PR Firm: information control and the Kosovo), (Tokyo: Koodansya, 2002).

NGOs have used the media to get their message directly to people to create public pressure. However, NGOs face a possible backlash from the media too. The media can easily make someone a hero when they are useful, but when they misbehave or are no longer useful, the media can pull them down easily too. This is because the story of a hero who lost his/her prestige is an interesting story that will receive much attention, a key goal of the media.

4.4 “NGO Divide”

Having seen the five interactions, it appears likely that the government and NGOs are trying to get hold of each other from both directions. These dynamics have affected the Government-NGOs relations in Japan, which has often been excluded from the existing research. Yet it is important to note that Japan’s NGO community is not one solid group.

There are some strong NGOs and other weak NGOs, and whether one can use the aforementioned interaction or not is dividing them into two groups; those who have and those have not. The author calls this the *NGO Divide*. Not only is this gap appearing between Japanese NGOs, as the relationships of some NGOs have become closer to the government and have become primary actors in a network, some other NGOs have moved away from the government and refuse financial support. Hirata observes this phenomenon and notes as follows:

These groups are most active at JANIC [a coordinator NGOs in Japan] and represent the NGO coordinating center. Excluded from the interaction with MOFA are small NGOs located outside the Tokyo area...In short, the Japanese NGOs community is diverse and only certain types of NGOs have direct

contact with MOFA and have the opportunity to influence the ministry's aid policy.⁶⁰

Peace Winds Japan (PWJ) and the Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC) are two examples belonging to the respective cases; PWJ is a fast-growing NGO in Japan in emergency relief, although its focus has started moving towards gender and development issues. PWJ has become a main actor of the Japan Platform and now is one of the most powerful NGOs in Japan despite only starting in 1996. Although PWJ does a large amount of self-funding, it receives financial assistance from Japan Platform, whose funding comes from Grant for Japanese NGOs in 2001 and 2002.⁶¹ JVC is illustrative of the latter case. It is one of the oldest and largest Japanese NGOs specialising in overseas development projects. JVC received financial support from the government at 8.4 percent in 2001.⁶² However, JVC staff has said that it has started trying to decrease the amount of money received from the Japanese government, although it still totals around 11.8 percent in 2002.⁶³ JVC personnel's reason for attempting to decrease official subsidies was to avoid "self-restriction". If the governmental subsidy continues to make up a large share of its finance, it would self-impose a restriction on JVC's aid activities. JVC does not participate in the Japan Platform partly for that reason. Kiyotaka Takahashi of JVC stated in an interview that: "Although we understand money is money and we need it, but we cannot accept having a large share of the government's assistance in our resources when we are against what

⁶⁰ Hirata, "Whither the Development State?: The Growing Role of NGOs in Japanese Aid Policy Making", 27

⁶¹ Mitsuhiro Saotome, "Nihon no ODA ni shimeru NGO/NPO no Yakuwari (Roles of NGO/NPO in Japanese ODA)", *Kokusai Mondai (International Affairs)* 517, (2003).

⁶² Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC), "Fiscal 2001 Financial Report", *Activities Guideline*, (JVC: Tokyo, 2002), 26.

⁶³ JVC, "Finance," *Trial and Error* 223, September (2002): 14.

the Japanese government pursue especially in development field.”⁶⁴

It is important to acknowledge that there are various attitudes within the NGO community. Some utilise the government’s assistance for their activities, while others refuse. This ‘NGOs Divide’ shows the possibility of not only a gap between the government and NGOs, but also competition among NGOs which will grow in the near future.

4.5 Conclusion: How have been interactions working?

It is reasonable to conclude that the Japanese government has tried to have control over the Japanese NGO community using the financial subsidies system, capacity building, and regular meetings. For example, in order to obtain the government’s approval for funding, NGOs learn to self-restrict their activities. There is little doubt that the government systems in place since 1989 is helping NGOs. This is because most Japanese NGOs are financially supported by these systems.⁶⁵ However, while the government describes it as ‘assistance’ or ‘support’⁶⁶, many NGO staff that I interviewed consider it ‘vague control’. The crucial question here is: Is the Japanese government actually letting NGOs ‘participate’ in its foreign aid strategy, or just ‘supporting’ them to be a vehicle to carry the country’s name?

However on the other hand, NGOs have been trying to put pressure on the government using various interactions. As for fighting back against the ‘vague control’ imposed by the government, Japanese NGOs have also been utilising the institutional cooperation scheme of regular meetings established in the late 1990s, even though the

⁶⁴ Kiyotaka Takahashi, interviewed by author, 22 April 2003.

⁶⁵ Pacific Asia Resource Center (PARC) (Japan), “NGO database”, n.d., <<http://www.parc-jp.org>> (15 October 2002).

⁶⁶ MOFA has used these words in a series of annual reports. For example, Japan’s ODA 1997: 121 and Japan’s ODA 1998: 82.

government intended to use them as controlling tool for NGOs. Some important outcomes drawn from NGO-the MOFA meetings include as a new subsidy scheme for Japanese NGOs. In comparison, NGO-the MOF meetings have raised questions from the ‘grassroots level’ of the NGOs, which the ministry implementing the aid would not have known had it not been informed at these meetings.

Having said that, the Japanese government has changed its aid strategy in small ways. This has included expanding governmental subsidies or implementing joint evaluations of overseas projects as NGOs demanded and suggested, though only changing its aid policy when faced with international requirements or criticism. The change of aid policy from vast bilateral relationships to “Peace Building” streams was the biggest example. However hard NGOs have pushed the adoption of human rights issues into Japan’s ODA policy at the meetings, the government shows no sign of taking it into account. Yet, some NGOs have been producing successful outcomes to put pressure on the government to change its attitude in foreign aid policy using many interactions. Four NGO activities will be analysed in the next chapters using case studies to clarify how the operation modes of Japanese NGOs is different from those of the Western or other Asian NGOs in terms of pressuring the Japanese central government.

Chapter 5

Case Study 1

Japanese Development NGO: Fight against the Established Authority

5.1 Introduction

The late emergence of the Japanese NGO community has already been discussed in **Chapter 1**. Even so, there are some NGOs that started their active operations after the 1970s. The Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC) is one such NGO and it has become one of the most powerful and influential development NGOs in Japan. Since its foundation, JVC has been carrying out a number of overseas projects to practise “efficient aid”.¹

JVC operated many overseas projects in the past, including projects in Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam. It has been operating aid activities separately from the state government for a few decades, but it started pouring much of its energy into the policy advocacy field in the 1990s. This was out of a need to promote the Japanese government to practise better Official Development Assistance (ODA). That means JVC has more interactions with the Japanese government than before in its policy advocacy activity, and it has brought some successful outcomes. The most outstanding outcome in the advocacy area in the 1990s was the cancellation of the export of harmful

¹ According to Bertin Martens, “efficient aid” is usually assessed on the following criteria as, “are programme objectives achieved in a sustainable manner, have policy reforms been implemented, and do they produce results in terms of economic growth and poverty reduction?” (Bertin Martens, “Aid Agencies and Aid Effectiveness”, Development Outreach: Putting knowledge to work for development, March 2004, <<http://www1.worldbank.org/devoutreach/march04/article.asp?id=240>> (16 March 2006). JVC has used this term to improve *quality* of Japanese aid, not quantity, to lobby the Japanese government. (JVC, Annual Report/ Fiscal 2004 and Fiscal 2005, [2004]: 24).

agricultural chemicals to Cambodia in 1993.² Until the present time, JVC has been working actively in pursuing the government for a 'better ODA' in networking with other domestic NGOs.

This chapter examines the mode of operation of JVC by analysing its interactions with the government. It will conclude that JVC has used interactions as means to exert influence on the Japanese government, a practice learnt from both Western and Asian NGOs.

For the detailed analysis, a number of questions are raised relating to the case of JVC: How have they tried to be influential in order to promote the government to better its foreign aid policy? What means and interactions have they used? Which interactions are most commonly seen? Are there any drawbacks?

The reasons for choosing JVC as the case study over 300 - 400 NGOs (the government estimation in a series of *Japan's ODA*) in this thesis are for the following reasons. Firstly, JVC is a purely Japanese domestic NGO, with most of the staff being Japanese. Some powerful international NGOs have their branches in Japan, such as Care Japan, Oxfam Japan, Save the Children Japan and Greenpeace Japan. It is often observed that these branch type NGOs possess similar modes of operations to their international headquarters, most often located in Western states. For this reason, they are not considered as 'purely Japanese NGOs'. This will be discussed further in the third case study. In the case of JVC, because it is merely a domestic organisation which has its head office in Japan, it is possible to extract some particular essential mode of operation practised by Japanese NGOs.

² JVC itself delivered a brochure on this issue in 1993 and Hirata Keiko described this success story in detail in her work, refer to Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 107 - 113.

Secondly, with its experience and history over the last two decades, JVC has been one of the leading development NGOs in Japan. Therefore, JVC has several clear interactions with the government that are valuable for analysis. In addition, JVC could be considered a model of a local development NGO. Based on the above reasons, this chapter will reveal JVC's effective style of operation that may be applicable to other local development NGOs in dealing with the government.

There is an argument of how to assess the impact and effectiveness of NGOs when studying actual cases. Interaction, an international development NGO working in overseas assistance field, makes a statement and concludes that it is a very difficult task to evaluate. It says as follows:

In order to share our success with our stakeholders and the wider public, we must provide evidence of our progress and achievement...Measures such as lean administrative-to-program ratios and large total budget size are very limited indicators³

NGOs' self-claim of impact in foreign aid has always been questioned that they often evaluate themselves higher than actual in order to attract more support. This is partly why this thesis does not rely solely on NGOs' resources. Matsumoto made a comment in *Newsweek* that even if the Japanese government claims in similar to what Japanese NGOs claim, it did not mean Japanese NGOs successfully influenced the government because international politics was not that simple.⁴

³ The Working Group on Evaluation and Program Effectiveness (2005) Interaction Position Statement on Demonstrating NGO Effectiveness: Approved by the IntreAction Board of Directors, September 20, 2005, Interaction, p.8.

⁴ A comment by Professor Tsuneo Matsumoto, quoted in Newsweek, 29 March 2006, 27.

Realising this difficulty of assessing impact of NGOs in foreign aid, it is very important to note here that NGOs impact can be read from government's reaction to issue. If government adopts similar concepts which would not have been without NGOs' interactions, it can be assumed that NGOs actually influence policies. For example, concepts such as 'sustainable', 'good governance' and 'software' were originally suggested by NGOs. Of course, this discussion of how to assess impact should be ongoing for future study but this thesis is grounding on the above statement to conduct the following case studies to analyse NGOs' interaction to be influential.

5.2. What is the Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC)?

History and Organisational Structure

Any research on NGOs is insufficient if it does not study the history of each organisation. This is because every organisation has its own way of developing operational strategy and no one is exactly the same as another. As such, the examination of the history of the NGO can be equivalent to analysing its own mode of operation. Thus, before moving on to study the behavioural modes of JVC in pressuring the Japanese government, its history and structure will be studied in this section.

History

In the "Vision" portion of its Mission Statements, JVC declares its activities as: "to realize a society where we all can live in harmony with each other".⁵ Its activities were started in Bangkok in the late 1970s by a small number of Japanese volunteers who were eager to provide support for Cambodian refugees in Thailand. Michiya Kumaoka,

⁵ Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC), Activities Guideline, (JVC: Tokyo, 2002), 28.

one of the founding members and the current director of JVC, recalls these days when he began working as a volunteer in Thailand. “no one would be able to turn his head away from those struggling people [Cambodian refugees]. Just wanting to do anything for them, I arrived in Bangkok and joined a volunteer group, which later grew into JVC.”⁶ Out of a need to integrate these people in order to practise more effective voluntary activities in Bangkok⁷, JVC started taking the form of an NGO in the late 1970s. It was led by Syunsuke Iwasaki, the former Director and Masako Hoshino, the former Secretary of JVC, and was officially established on 27 February, 1980.

In the past, JVC concentrated on carrying out overseas development projects rather than on policy advocacy.⁸ Its main focus is still set on implementing actual projects in states such as Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, South Africa, Afghanistan, and the Middle East. However, at the same time, JVC realised that policy advocacy needed to be carried out in collaboration with the actual projects to promote better aid activities. In other words, JVC was able to pursue its own policy advocacy with the government based on its rich field experience as backup. Having developed strong confidence in practising projects to support people at grassroots level, JVC moved into policy advocacy in the early 1990s.

Organisational Structure

What makes JVC stand out from other development NGOs in Japan is its strong organisational structure. The structure was developed in order to operate four missions:

⁶ Michiya Kumaoka, interviewed by the author, 24 June 2003.

⁷ Kumaoka, Michiya, Cambodia Sai-zen-sen (Frontline in Cambodia), Tokyo: Iwanami Press, 1993, 12 - 15.

⁸ JVC’s mission statements are; 1) community-based sustainable development, 2) post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation, 3) disaster relief and reconstruction, and 4) grass-roots networking. (Refer to JVC, Activities Guideline, [Tokyo: JVC, 2002], 28.)

1) community-based sustainable development, 2) post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation, 3) disaster relief and reconstruction, and 4) grass-roots networking. Four important aspects can be observed in JVC's organisational structure; sufficient human resources, a good fundraising basis, an efficient and quick decision-making process, and a strong leadership.

Large Number of Staff

Compared with other Japanese local NGOs, JVC has a large number of staff both in Tokyo and overseas to support its projects. It may be a little too harsh to put JVC and other NGOs on an equal footing for examination owing to the fact that many other NGOs are very small and possess far less experience, but there is a big difference in the number of staff. Smaller NGOs have only two or three full-time, paid staff. Quite often, they have no full-time staff and are all volunteer-based.

On the other hand, JVC has around 40 full time staff, which is one of the largest among Japanese NGOs (**Appendix 2: Table 2**). Interestingly, the large staff numbers in organisations that are engaged in education or emergency relief, are also present in development NGOs. For example, the Japanese Red Cross Society, for which the Empress Michiko serves as an honorary president, employs 53,879 staff.⁹ Peace Winds Japan, a fast-growing emergency relief NGO, counted 290 regular staff. The difference in the staff numbers indicates that there is already a gap within the NGO community in Japan, even though the community was slow to grow in Japan.

Fundraising Strategy

⁹ There is argument about whether the RCSJ can be defined as an NGO or not, but in this case it will be analysed because its particulars match those of NGOs.

While many other NGOs do not, JVC has a good fundraising basis. As mentioned in the official report, ‘financial weakness’ is the key term that describes the weak point of Japanese NGOs. JVC, however, has remained financially strong on the following three fundraising strategies: donations (general donations and annual charity concerts), selling calendars and the membership system. In addition to this, there is the occasional prize money awarded by some fund organisations that contributes to the finance, but this will not be discussed here because it is rather an irregular strategy.¹⁰

Approximately, one third of the whole financial basis of JVC is provided by personal donations.¹¹ The donation manager of JVC states that donations for ‘emergency relief’, or any popular causes such as Afghanistan and Iraq, received much more attention and drew larger donations. However, once they became out of date, donations quickly decreased.¹² JVC has had to face a quick shift in the interest of people in donations; “a long-term issue such as development assistance that JVC has focused on is certainly less appealing than visible and fast-result emergency relief for people”.¹³ This is also why the Japanese government showed enthusiasm for emergency relief aid activities recently, since it draws much attention from the public which is good PR.

One source of donations, the annual Christmas concert in Tokyo and Osaka, gathered a large amount of money when the Japanese economy was in good form. Donations and the sales of tickets, which companies in sympathy and cooperation

¹⁰ Governmental agencies and firms have prizes with award money for those organisations engaged in improving society. Often, powerful NGOs for good relations recommend and refer each other for these prizes and the prize money contributes to their finances.

¹¹ It estimated by JVC that 30 million Japanese yen were donated in 2001 and 54 million in 2002. (JVC, “Financial Basis of JVC,” Structure of JVC, 2 April 2003, <http://www1.jca.apc.org/jvc/projects/annual_2001_2002/2002budget.html> (30 July 2003).

¹² Michiya Kumaoka, interviewed by the author, 17 June 2003.

¹³ Yoko Ogino, interviewed by the author, 10 June 2003.

bought in bulk, once earned 10,000,000 JPY (almost equivalent to US \$ 100,000).¹⁴

This was because the friendly companies bought them in bulk. However, owing to a protracted recession in Japan, the amount decreased to 5,800,000 JPY in 2001. The amount increased again in 2002, but it was still far from what was achieved at the peak period of Japanese economy.¹⁵

The second strategy is selling calendars, from which profit is formidable. For instance, the gain from this strategy in 2001 was 9,153,178 JPY.¹⁶ The amount decreased in 2002 to 6,707,018 JPY but went up again to 9,153,178 JPY in 2003.¹⁷ This strategy is made possible by voluntary help from camera men/women who provide photos for the calendars every year.

The third strategy, the membership system, profits from membership fees from individuals. This is not a large but a stable income. The aim of the membership system is to focus not only on the financial gain but to involve Japanese people in JVC's aid activities, in addition to obtaining credibility and transparency for its operations from the public.¹⁸

By operating these three main fundraising strategies, JVC maintained a strong financial basis for a long time. However, it is also true that much of this was owed to the prosperity of the Japanese economy until its burst started in 1991. Since the crash of the Japanese economy, the amount of money raised in the three strategies all decreased, as shown above. In this regard, what JVC needs and tries to do is to keep attracting the public to become involved in JVC's activities.

¹⁴ Tomoko Ishikawa, interviewed by the author, 7 May 2003.

¹⁵ Tomoko Ishikawa, interviewed by the author, 2 May 2003.

¹⁶ JVC, "Fiscal 2001 Financial Report," in *Activity Guide*, (Tokyo: JVC, 2002), 26.

¹⁷ JVC, 26. It was also reinforced by Kunio Iwama, interviewed by the author, 30 September 2003.

¹⁸ Ikuko Nakayama, interviewed by the author, 25 May 2003.

With these difficulties, JVC started slowly depending on the governmental subsidies. About 20 percent of all revenue in 2001 was from governmental resources and it was expected to be around 25 percent for 2002.¹⁹ The sources were the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), The Postal Saving for International Voluntary Aid in Japan, the Japan Environment Corporation Association for International Cooperation of Agriculture and Forestry, the National Land Afforestation Promotion Organization, Green Fund, the Tokyo International Foundation, and the Hiroshima sub-national Government. Among these, the largest donor was the MOFA since other funding was for specified issues such as deforestation. There has always been a concern that by accepting large amounts of government financial assistance, JVC would come to feel dominated by the government.²⁰ Because of these concerns, it started trying to keep a certain distance from the government by trying to obtain support from other sources such as international organisations and local governments.²¹

Open Ended Decision-Making Process

The third aspect of JVC's strong organisational structure is its open and quick process of decision-making. Anyone, including visitors and young student volunteers, can attend meetings every two weeks, at which casual issues including daily project assessment are discussed. By doing this, JVC is not only securing the transparency of the running of the organisation, but also various opinions from all directions had the chance to be heard.

¹⁹ JVC, Activities Guideline, (Tokyo: JVC, 2002), 26 - 27.

²⁰ It can be reflected by the recent Grant for Grassroots Project (GGP) subsidy application where the amount that JVC received was less than what it applied for. The MOFA holds the right to decide the funding amount for each applicant NGO.

²¹ Michiya Kumaoka, interviewed by author, 24 June 2003.

The more important issues are sent up to *Daihyo-sya Kaigi* or the board of directors after regular office meetings. Members of this meeting are the leaders of each of the activity groups of JVC. Because the board comprises not only executive members from outside but JVC staff, who work closely on a daily basis, the meeting are normally very casual and easy to access.

In this open-ended casual decision-making structure, who holds leadership can be crucial. Usually, an NGO board is not made by election or examinations, unlike governmental agencies and firms. Despite the level of the impact on policy formation, most often, founding and active members take over executive positions as the organisation grows larger. On these terms, leadership is a crucial concern in organisational strength.

Leadership

It is commonly known that strong leadership is required to manage any organisation effectively.²² NGOs are no exception. Michiya Kumaoka, the successor to the founding director²³ especially exerted his leadership and managed the organisation to become one of the most powerful NGOs in Japan. He was named as an advisor in many government-NGO related committees, and asked to give public lectures. With his high reputation, JVC also gained a high reputation by having him as a leader.

On the other hand, there are several downsides to strong leadership. Two possible downsides are: the government's cooption of strong leaders causes them to lose their sharpness and the reputation for strong leadership only belongs to leaders individually,

²² For instance, see Masao Tao, *Jissen NPO Manejimento (Practical NPO Management)*, (Kyoto:Minerva Shobo, 2004), Chapter 6.

²³ Michiya Kumaoka is the current director following the founding director, Syunsuke Iwasaki.

not to organisations. Clerk (1991) describes this as applicable not only to JVC but also to those powerful NGO leaders in Japan;

Many liberal governments are coopting NGO leaders on to various official bodies or commissions. This also is a double-edged sword. On the one hand it gives an important forum for NGO opinions. On the other hand it can dull the sharp edge of NGO criticism and occupy the attention of much of the rest of NGO talent.²⁴

There is an issue regarding the fame that belongs to charismatic leaders. The director of JVC gained a good reputation from all directions including the government, journalists and academics. Because of this reputation, he had been named in several government committees as an advisor and lecturer. It is undeniable that his well-known name brought JVC a certain popularity and credibility for its operations. However, what has to be mentioned here is that for the most part, he gained that fame individually. However, the fame of the organisation is based on his individual honour and distinction. It is possible to foresee that once he has left the position, the fame for the organisation could vanish as well. Hernandez and Leslie (2001) conducts a study of what would come after a charismatic leader in a volunteer organisation, and found there was strong resistance to such organizational changeover.²⁵

How Has JVC Secured Its Position? The Legitimacy that Secured JVC's

Position

²⁴ John Clark, Democratizing Development: The Role of Voluntary Organizations, (Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 1991), 68.

²⁵ Refer to Chintia M. Hernandez. and Donald R. Leslie, "Charismatic Leadership: The Aftermath," Nonprofit Management + Leadership 11, no.4 (Summer 2001), San Francisco: Mandel Center for Nonprofit Organisations, 2001).

The history and structure of JVC were analysed in order to understand why JVC has come to interact with the central government to promote better aid. Therefore, it is now time to question the legitimacy of JVC as the NGO to carry out political advocacy.

The importance of the legitimacy of any political entity to carry out any campaign is stated as follows:

All the actors in a campaign, both the NGOs and their targets, spend time and energy establishing and maintaining their legitimacy and contesting that of their opponents. This is often essential for the NGOs in terms of campaigning successfully and raising adequate resources.²⁶

How do NGOs secure their legitimacy? According to Alan Hudson (2000), NGOs claim their legitimacy for their advocacy work on the following three bases:

- 1) Their institutional survival, track record and reputation, which are history, organisational structures, principles, rights, values, and southern roots;
- 2) Organisation of the NGO itself; governance structures and staffing policies such as democratic membership structures;
- 3) An international code of conduct where the “position being advocated was a basic right, a moral or ethical principle or value”.²⁷

The long history and experience of JVC fulfils this first point. The second point is to be exercised by the membership system. In order to secure JVC’s credibility and

²⁶ Jennifer Chapman and Thomas Fisher, “The effectiveness of NGO campaigning: lessons from practice,” in Development Advocacy, ed. Debora Eade (London Oxfam Great Britain, 2002), 123.

²⁷ Alan Hudson, “Making the Connection: Legitimacy Claims, Legitimacy Chains and Northern NGOs’ International Advocacy,” in New Roles and Relevance: Development NGOs and the Challenge of Change, ed., David Lewis and Tina Wallace (Connecticut: Kumarian Press, 2000), 92.

transparency as well as legitimacy, a *Kaiinn Sookai* (General Members Meeting) is held once a year, usually in June. This meeting is an opportunity for JVC supporting members to get together and present opinions directly to the staff. Lastly, the third point will be addressed with its internationally recognised reputation for the implementation of past projects.

It is now clear that JVC possesses the legitimacy to practise policy advocacy. The next section will analyse the interactions undertaken by JVC in order to become more influential in policy advocacy in the 1990s.

5.3 Interactions by the Japan International Volunteer Centre

All available interactions have been used by JVC for promoting a ‘better ODA’. In its past activities, both the ‘official’ and ‘unofficial’ interactions are utilised. The interactions can be grouped roughly into seven categories which were set out in the previous chapter. According to this categorisation, each interaction of JVC will be analysed to examine its mode of operation in order to specify its features as the leading development NGO, as well as what problems really lie underneath.

‘Meeting’ interaction type

The previous chapter has already discussed the way a ‘meeting’ can be taken advantage of by the government to secure the transparency and accountability of NGOs in official aid activities. This type of interaction was considered to be a tool of the government’s loose control over NGOs. It was analysed that possibly by making them more casual the government gives no guarantees to involve them into decision-making. On the other hand, NGOs have taken advantage of ‘sub-official meetings’ by displaying

records of these meetings in internet archives. This section will discuss how JVC has taken advantage of these meetings and how it has worked to create pressure on the government.

JVC policy advisers have tried to attend as many meetings as possible, not only at meetings between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), but also Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Ministry of Finance (MOF), and anything else that has concerned official aid policies. Some meeting organisers have invited JVC as official advisor and some were just open for all concerned people or organisations. When the policy advisors could not attend, other staff and even volunteer staff were sent instead. This was to raise any concerns at question time, observe the government's intentions in aid policy and also obtain official handouts and resources delivered at meetings. After attending these meetings, any questions and concerns were brought back to the Tokyo office and they were used in creating JVC's next advocacy movement. Hirata (2002) describes JVC's involvement in governmental meetings as follows:

As a leading NGO in JANIC [Japan NGO Centre for International Cooperation], JVC often represents the Japanese NGO community in government-NGO negotiations. Many, if not all, MOFA-NGO conferences and councils include JVC members as participants. Even though JVC is outspoken about its opposition to Japanese infrastructure-based aid, the MOFA has thus far been willing to work with the group, partly because of the influence of the group over other NGOs in Japan.²⁸

²⁸ Keiko Hirata, Civil Society in Japan: The Government Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 144.

JVC also attended on behalf of other smaller NGOs with fewer staff. The other smaller NGOs that had only two or three full-time staff (or sometimes none), were unable to send extra staff to attend these meetings. Instead, JVC sent staff to these meetings and showed NGO's attendance. In a summary of activities in 2001, it was mentioned that: "JVC attends a regular consultation or a study meeting hosted [on ODA reforms] by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA)... While keenly advocating, we present gathered information regarding ODA issues to the public to draw people's attention."²⁹

As well as showing records of these meetings to the public, JVC also displayed its analysis on the issues from the meetings, both on its website, and by quarterly magazines. By asking for any suggestions and opinions from the public on these information tools, bilateral communications was carried out between JVC and the public. Through this communication, JVC stimulated the public to have an interest in issues concerning official aid policies, which otherwise would have been known only through the government's official claims and information.

'Workshop' and 'Symposium' interaction type

It is traditional to hold workshops and symposiums to create pressure on the Japanese government.³⁰ As such, JVC, holds a number of workshops and symposiums regarding Japan's aid policy, often raised from issues analysed from official meetings that JVC staff attended. The aim of holding these workshops lies in raising the awareness of people toward development issues, and in showing the Japanese

²⁹ JVC, Activities Guideline, (Tokyo: JVC, 2000), 21.

³⁰ Hirata, "Whither the Development State? The Growing Role of NGOs in Japanese Aid Policy Making", 20.

government that people, potential voters, are getting information about ODA projects from non-governmental source.

The most outstanding outcome of these was stopping the food aid under the Bilateral Grant scheme to Cambodia in 1993 as mentioned earlier. This case has already been analysed closely by JVC itself, as well as in the work of Hirata (2002). Thus, there is no need to go any deeper than to describe what happened and how the symposium worked.

In 1993, Cambodia, where JVC has a long engagement, saw a campaign to stop the Japanese government from delivering unnecessary agricultural chemicals under the [Grant Aid](#) scheme totalling 500,000,000 JPY in [food aid](#). With natural enemies in fields, Cambodia did not need these kinds of chemicals. JVC visited the ministries and agencies concerned, such as the MOFA and JICA, with other NGOs members and held a symposium in 1993. The symposium attracted a great deal of public attention as JVC had planned. As a result, the Japanese government withheld the aid, which has not been implemented until recently.³¹ The symposium was not the only driving force that stopped the government from delivering the chemicals, but it is undeniable that the symposium helped to obtain public support and make the problem visible.

Apart from this outstanding result, JVC has been actively involved in reforming ODA policy in mid-1990s. The movement toward ODA reform had already been begun in the mid-1980s by some concerned scholars, and their academic works caught much public attention in the early 1990s.³² JVC joined this movement and became the major member of the other coalition group named “the Citizen-NGO Liaison Council”. Since

³¹ Mari Nakamura, interviewed by the author, 9 June 2003.

³² Main scholars of a group which made the ODA issue public were Yoshinori Murai, Kazuo Sumi, and Saneatsu Musyakooji.

then, JVC has positively committed itself to practising reform of ODA by holding seminars, workshops and symposiums.

In one of many examples of the activities, JVC organised a series of workshops on ODA reforms with other networking NGOs, such as “Opinion Exchange Symposia between NGO and MOFA regarding ODA Reforms”. This symposium was held to target the forthcoming official ODA reform policy. Before the delivery of the official statement, JVC and other NGOs planned to show their opinions concerning governmental officials directly. At the Symposia, JVC and other organising NGOs invited scholars, government officials, NGO staff and also media to raise issues and questions for debate.

The reform of ODA policy, particularly ODA projects such as food aid to Cambodia and environmental issues in Southeast Asia, were popular topics in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Recent change in the world situation, however, seems to have started to have an effect on the topics of symposiums and workshops.

“9.11” or “September Eleventh” changed the course of the world in the post-Cold War era. Development issues do not get as much attention as the “War on Terrorism” does these days. It is no exception for JVC to host symposiums and workshops of popular issues that attract many people. The recent symposiums hosted by JVC also focused on the relationship between the ODA and Peace Building. Several symposiums were already held in 2005 but it is still too early to evaluate the outcomes of them. Yet, because peace building is closely connected to sending the Self Defence Force (SDF) overseas, which also relates to Japan’s national security issue, it is getting harder for JVC to create pressure on the government. That is because national security is one of the most sensitive topics of the government, which does not want much public scrutiny.

Because of the secretiveness of the government, JVC's symposium on ODA and peace building could not obtain enough information and failed to create much public pressure.

On international development issues, JVC is now trying to organise a campaign for putting pressure on the Japanese government at the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to make Japan a major player on this issue.³³ This campaign is to eradicate poverty in the world, which is an essential development problem that JVC has long been working to improve. In regard to this, JVC held a symposium in December 2004 and invited a chief of the MDGs' project, as well as succeeding in involving ordinary people by getting them interested. JVC's goal in this area is to pressure the Japanese government to introduce new policies towards international development by 2008, when Japan plays host to the G-8 Summit again.

'Personal Relations' interaction type

Making friends with people with power is not always easy. Yet, some NGOs have succeeded in making good friends with high-powered people and moved them to pursue favourable policies for them. Understanding that this 'personal relation' type interaction is influential, many NGOs have tried to practise it. JVC has been no exception.

JVC has tried to be close to Members of Parliament (MPs), journalists and academics, who are considered to be 'influential' in aid issues. Regarding MPs, JVC policy advisers have created a good relationship with members of the opposition parties and at the House of Councillors. Even so, in Japan's political system, it is necessary to

³³ There are eight goals set by the United Nations: 1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, 2) achieve universal primary education, 3) promote gender equality and empower women, 4) reduce child mortality, 5) improve maternal health, 6) combat HIV/AIDS malaria and other disease, 7) ensure environmental sustainability, 8) develop a global partnership for development. (See UN website: <www.un.org/millenniumgoals/> for more information.)

be close to the ruling party, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), in order to exert much powerful influence. Through organising study groups and face-to-face meetings, JVC advocacy staff made some efforts to explain JVC's opinions and activities, which the MPs may have in common. Although Hirata (2002) observes a positive side of this interaction on the pesticide issue in 1993,³⁴ in the friendly relationship that has existed between politicians, no actual results have been seen yet regarding ODA policy recently.

Why is there such a difference between those who have succeeded and those who have not in this type of interaction? This difference can be explained by the fact that politicians choose topics that they hope to work on in order to improve their political image with the public. This is supported by Yasuko Matsumoto, the former Greenpeace Campaigner, in her answer during an interview, that Japanese politicians tended to join NGO campaigns which produced outstanding result such as banning landmines, but not creating something new that may cause disruption in politics such as protecting ozone layers.³⁵

In addition to politicians, the policy advocacy staff of JVC have also made efforts to befriend journalists. Yet, unlike the Malaysian case where journalists pose questions at press conferences on behalf of close NGOs introduced by Oishi (1995),³⁶ Japanese journalists are not in a position to write their own articles on their merits. Sponsors of major newspapers in Japan are usually closely connected to the central government. For this reason, reporters and journalists who belong to the organisations are sometimes restricted from writing certain articles. That is partly why, despite the fact that JVC

³⁴ Hirata, Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy, 144.

³⁵ Yasuko Matsumoto, interviewed by the author, 20 January 2004.

³⁶ Mikio Oishi, interviewed by the author, 15 October 2002. He has had work experience as an NGO staff member in Malaysia therefore his viewpoint is valid as an insider.

staff and journalists go for drinks for *Nomi-nication*³⁷, they have rarely written articles in favour of NGOs.

Some NGO personnel have tried to create ‘personal relationships’ by being politicians themselves. Their aim was to make a breakthrough in the “Iron Triangle” type decision-making process from inside. Clark states: “In some countries they [NGO leaders] have been persuaded to leave the NGO sector and to move into government. This should not be seen as a ‘selling-out’ but as building a more effective platform on which to make the NGO case.”³⁸ Those who tried to be politicians or became politicians include: MP Nobuhiko Syudo from Interband (House of Councillors), Shunsuke Iwasaki from JVC, MP Kiyohiko Toyama from Peace Winds Japan (PWJ) of the New Komeito (House of Councillors) and so on. Among them, Kiyomi Tsujimoto, a former MP of the House of Representatives can be seen as the most prominent example to explain the advantages and drawbacks of this situation.

The former MP used to be the director of a Japanese NGO, the Peace Boat which has gained a reputation for its activities and experience among Japanese people. Considering that reputation and Tsujimoto’s popularity, the leader of the Japan Socialist Party (one of the opposition parties), asked her to run as an MP candidate in 1996. At the ODA related money scandal by the then MP Suzuki Muneo in 2002, Tsujimoto criticised him and the Prime Minister bitterly, and accused the MOFA of being severely manipulated by the politician on the committee. For her

³⁷ *Nomi-nication* is a Japanese English that means communication over drinking, which is considered to be more effective way of negotiation in Japan.

³⁸ John Clark, “Policy influence, lobbying and advocacy,” in Making a difference: NGO and development in a changing world, ed., Michael Edwards and David Hulme (London: Earthscan, 1992), 193.

attention-grabbing performance,³⁹ she has become one of the most famous MPs in Japan, and her former position as the director of the Peace Boat has been highlighted again. A severe backlash, however, followed. A weekly magazine revealed suspicion of her spending the salary of her political secretary illegally, a secretary who was paid by the government. This forced her to resign as an MP, and she was later arrested. At the same time, the name of the NGO that she once directed was covered with mud.

Creating a personal relationship can be a double-edged sword as shown above and not efficient all of the time. Having understood that, JVC has been trying to get behind the closed door by being friends with people with power. By doing so, JVC has brought some changes to Japan's aid policy. This strategy was used by other NGOs, and will be analysed in the next two case studies. This is because Japanese politics depend largely on 'who you know' more than 'who you are'.

'International/Domestic Network' interaction type

In order to formulate effective influential activities, JVC has built both international and domestic networks. International networks especially, that create outside pressure (or *Gai-Atsu*) were proved to be very effective as demonstrated in the previous chapter. Using the prominent character of the Japanese government, which is sensitive to international opinions of Japan, JVC has been building networks both domestically and internationally to form pressure.

As for a domestic network, JVC has become an *umbrella* NGO for other smaller NGOs. "Umbrella" here means that JVC covers other NGOs with similar interests in Japan's aid policy, such as development issues, ODA Reform, the anti-personnel

³⁹ She has chanted "So-ri (Mr. Prime Minister)" twelve times at the Parliament committee and it has become a famous phrase among the Japanese population.

landmine issue and environmental problems. It is true that the bigger you become, the stronger you become. In Malaysia, where the government possesses a strong authority in controlling its NGOs, building networks among NGOs has been a common tool to put pressure on the government.⁴⁰

Several NGOs in Japan are directly related to JVC, either originating from JVC or having overlapping staff with JVC. These examples include Mekong Watch, working on policy advocacy in ODA projects around the Mekong area; ODA-NET which concentrates on watching the Japanese government's overall ODA project implementations, and working on ODA Reform. In the area of landmines, JVC has had strong network relations with the Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL). This organisation will be the case study in the following chapter. One of the founding members of JCBL has also been a JVC staff.⁴¹ This character of each organisation makes networks easy to form since there is less competition and more coordination.

The aforementioned JVC's policy advocacy, the Cambodian pesticide case in 1993, serves an example of using a combination of 'Network' type and 'Workshop' and 'Symposium' type interactions for effective leverage. At the same time, JVC has been leading a campaign since March 2000, on postponing the development plan in Pleknot under the bilateral aid scheme (Yen Loan), which was requested from the Cambodian government in 1999, based on the fact that the projects have not involved people at the grassroots level who would be affected the most.⁴² Other international NGOs, such as Oxfam Great Britain (GB), were already involved in this campaign when JVC joined

⁴⁰ Mikio Oishi, interviewed by the author, 24 September 2002.

⁴¹ Toshihiro Shimizu, a JVC Secretary, also commits to JCBL as one of major members.

⁴² Source from JVC homepage, "Advocacy Activity in Cambodia," Projects, n.d., <www1.jca.apc.org/jvc/jp/projects/Cambodia/pastprj02cover.html> (3 July 2005).

the stream. Despite the late start, by closely watching the Japanese government on a regular basis, JVC has been playing a major role on this issue.

In addition to domestic networks, building international networks has not only become an effective way of pressuring the government, but also building a reputation for the reliability of JVC. It has worked jointly with several international organisations, starting from its very first activities in Thailand with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Since then, it has been working in a partnership relationship with other institutions such as the United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP) for food aid activities in North Korea. These international partnerships with outside bodies have given JVC the strength to maintain its autonomous position. This is because in the era of NGOs mushrooming, when the number grew from 300 to 400 within a decade, having partnership relationships with official international agencies has proved to have more reliability in providing a good image of JVC to distinguish it from the others. This international connection also helps JVC to obtain external funding, which allows it to keep a certain distance from the Japanese government, who pulls the strings of NGOs through its financial assistance. JVC received funds from UNHCR and the Canada Fund in 2001, and that portion has gone up to 13 percent of its total income. In 2002, the United Nations Volunteer also provided funds to JVC.

JVC also has solid networks not only with international organisations but with international NGOs and local NGOs in developing countries.⁴³ Their cooperative relationships have also given JVC accountability in that it understands actual development situations around the world and takes them into account in its aid

⁴³ JVC, “Mo Hitotsu no Sekai Chizu (Another World map)”, in Trial and Error 239, July-August (2004): 2 - 7.

activities as well as practical collaborations such as launching joint campaigns with local NGOs.

‘Media Usage’ interaction type

JVC has been reluctant to make its activities too visible out of the belief that its activities are for the sake of people in need and not for the organisation itself. However, it is undeniable that running the organisation and its operations requires finance, and those whose activities are public, receive more funding. For this reason, many NGOs use the media as a device to highlight their activities.

The media is an important tool for NGOs to make their activities visible to obtain public support. Public recognition gives them strength and influential power to pressure authorities, which are sensitive about public opinion in the next election. Murai (1992), who is a scholar specialising in Japan’s ODA to Asian states, has brought a media crew to the meeting with the Japanese government officials, understanding what it meant to them.⁴⁴

Peace Winds Japan (PWJ), a fast growing emergency relief NGO, is a good example of how NGOs utilise the media as an influential tool. Tadashi Onishi, the founder and the current director of PWJ, gained his educational background at a British university when studying NGO strategy, so he is well aware of the effectiveness of the media in NGO management. For instance, in the overseas spots of its aid activities, PWJ staff wear T-shirts with the name of PWJ on the back when filmed by media crew so they are clearly shown on air. It also let a TV station accompany its overseas activities for the filming of a non-fiction programme. On the other hand, it is important

⁴⁴ Yoshinori Murai, Kensyo Nippon no ODA (Examining Japan’s ODA), (Tokyo: Gakuyo Shobo, 1992), 152.

to mention that there could be a backlash from appearing too much in the media. During the incident concerning the MP Muneo Suzuki in 2001, Onishi gave a press conference while dressed in an expensive suit. The image of himself and the NGO he was Director of was immediately damaged by his appearance, for NGOs are expected to '*be contented with honest poverty*' in Japanese society. The amount of the donations for PWJ after this press conference was said to have decreased substantially.⁴⁵

Owing to the aforementioned reason, JVC has been hesitant to make media appearances, claiming, "we operate aid activities not for letting people know who does them, but for the people's own sake. We prefer invisible aid to visible".⁴⁶ Even so, the power of the media cannot be ignored and some other efforts, such as publishing books, videos, and newsletters have been made. Interestingly, NGOs do not appear very much on TV.

In addition, JVC has a unique way of making its activities visible to the outside world. Every Saturday, it holds volunteer seminars for people who want to support JVC activities. It is mainly for gaining volunteer supporters, but at the same time, it increases its public appearance through individuals. The so-called *word-of-mouth* way of communication is important in Japanese society. People tend to believe what other people tell them based on their actual experiences.

The many volunteers and activists who participate in NGO work typically function as opinion-makers in their local communities. They disseminate information about

⁴⁵ Ikuko Nakayama, interviewed by the author, 9 June 2003.

⁴⁶ Hideaki Kurakawa, interviewed by the author, 12 April 2003.

their experiences, insights and attitudes, and in this way create understanding for foreign cultures and for the need for international solidarity and cooperation.⁴⁷

As a fact, after taking part in these seminars, the number of those who register for membership increased after they talked about JVC to other people.⁴⁸

Newspaper articles and publications are other media tools for as to making its name and activities visible. Scholars who originally attacked Japan's ODA in the late 1980s used their publications to highlight the issues. As Japanese NGOs have gained public attention since 1995, newspapers have followed their activities constantly. JVC's predominant personnel, such as Michiya Kumaoka and Kiyotaka Takahashi, have appeared in one of the major newspapers several times to support comments on the government's aid policy. Other field staff, who usually operate their activities overseas, also get interviewed on their actual activities by newspapers. More people read newspapers than they do books or journals, for they are often 'delivered' to people like TV programmes. Newspapers have a large impact on people instantly. One example can be given of this. When the United Nations World Food Programme (UNWFP) Japan Regional Office (where the author was working as an intern in 2001), appeared in a newspaper about its operations, the number of queries about donations and activities increased drastically on the following days. As well as in the case of PWJ director, this explains that newspapers have the ability to influence people's attitude toward NGOs, when they had less interest before. There is a negative aspect, of course, as one JVC staff stated that these 'enthusiastic supporters' are temporary, and the difficult and

⁴⁷ John Degenbol-Martunussen and Poul Engberg-Pedersen, Aid: Understanding International Development Cooperation (London: Zen Books, 2003), 162.

⁴⁸ Ikuko Nakayama, interviewed by the author, 23 May 2003.

important part was to move them to maintain their enthusiasm after the topic had lost its freshness.

The more JVC gets public recognition through various media tools, resulting in an increase in the number of supporting members and publications such as newspaper articles, the less the Japanese government feels it can ignore JVC's opinions in terms of its aid policy. As a result, there are not many meetings and conferences held by the government, that NGOs are allowed to take part in, where the name of JVC as participant cannot be seen.

5.4 New Challenge: ODA Reform

NGO's Joint Effort towards ODA Reform

The case of ODA reform, which will be analysed in this section, was one of the new fields when JVC shifted its focus partly to policy advocacy, after having concentrated on carrying out actual development projects for the last two decades. This section will examine JVC's interactions over this case and reveal how JVC has been making use of various interactions to promote 'better ODA', as well as what has resulted.

Since Japan's overseas aid policy started as a part of war reparations for damages during the war, there were many areas considered inappropriate for legitimate aid policy due to its heavy commercialism. That is why some scholars who were concerned with these issues in Japan's ODA revealed them to the public from the late 1980s to the early 1990s. Some of these publications and the movements are still ongoing. JVC,

which has its own ‘Code of Conduct for Development’⁴⁹ also joined this stream and has been trying to intercept Japan’s aid decision-making process by various means.

Firstly, JVC has joined the already established domestic NGO network (ODA Reform Network Tokyo) to tackle this issue.⁵⁰ Although it joined at a later stage, JVC has taken a leadership role in this network using its organisational strength. This network has been working effectively, holding workshops, symposiums, and making petitions and recommendations with large number of participants for a stronger impression on the government (‘Network’ and ‘Campaign’ type interaction). Secondly, several meetings and symposiums were held to express their opinions for promoting a ‘better ODA’. Thirdly, using the opportunity in which one JVC staff was selected as an official member for *ODA Sogo Senryaku Kaigi* (ODA Comprehensive Strategy Conference) in June 2002. JVC expressed its view on ODA reform at 22 meetings in total in the presence of MOFA officials working on ODA reform, academics and journalists (‘Meeting’ type interaction).

As a result of joint efforts by several NGOs, the following recommendation for ODA reform was submitted to the government in 1999 by them:

1) Clarifying ODA philosophy;

“ODA should be used to support ‘self-help’ of the poorest to improve their lives economically, socially and culturally with a respect for their tradition and

⁴⁹ They are: “Indigenous knowledge and techniques as well as diverse cultures, community based environmental conservation and management, people’s initiative and participation, development of people’s potentials and capabilities in diverse fields, people’s self-reliance and equal partnership and equal participation of women and men (gender equality)”. (JVC, *Activities Guideline*, September 2002, p.28.)

⁵⁰ ODA Reform Network was established in September 1996 and it aims to reform the ODA policy of Japan. It had 57 cooperating groups and 3 branches (Cyubu, Kansai and Kyusyu) in 2003. There are 4 main areas of activities of ODA Reform Networking; building networks between domestic NGOs and citizens, building networks with international NGOs (The Reality of Aid), policy advocacy for the Japanese government and Members of Parliament and taking the local voice from developing countries into activities (Source from ODA Reform Network-Tokyo, Pacific Asia Resource Centre).

culture. In implementation, human rights, democracy, environment conservation and gender have to be respected.”

2) Policy Recommendation for ODA Reform

a. Prioritise ‘Social Development’

“Japan’s ODA should be able to spend 50 percent of the budget for ‘Social Development’ and especially for the empowerment of women, a half of the overall amount of ODA should be spent.”

b. Single Aid Administration

“Multiple aid administration of Japan obstructs an effective aid implementation so we strongly recommend the founding of a single aid administration.”

c. Setting Guidelines on projects and legalising the ODA Charter

“In order to fulfil the pledge of the Japanese government in a series of international conferences, setting the guideline on environment, gender, resident removal, and rights of indigenous people is recommended. In the case of unsatisfied assessment, guidelines should exert the power to terminate projects.”

d. A Cooperation System in Project Implementation with a Participatory Approach

“In order to practise people’s participation, Japan’s ODA should run an Inspection Panel such as that of the World Bank.”

e. Parliament Participation and Information Disclosure

“For exercising the rights of taxpayers from whom the resources of Japan’s ODA come, a committee specialising in ODA should be established within the Parliament, where representatives of the Japanese people are to express their opinions. Information disclosure is also strongly recommended at every level of

the ODA implementation process and the information is to be written in each language for outside Japan.”

f. Development Education⁵¹

After the submission of the recommendations, JVC continued to work on ODA reform issues, such as publishing articles on ODA reform. It also held a symposium in April 2003 called, “ODA Minaoshi ni Kansuru NGO/Gaimu-syo Iken Koukan Kai (NGO/MOFA opinions exchange on ODA reform)”, and invited governmental officials, NGO staff, the media and many other people (‘Workshop’ and ‘Symposium’ type interaction).

A New Charter: Improvement or retreat?

Besides these upcoming NGO movements, the MOFA itself regarded ODA reform as one of the main pillars for MOFA improvement. ODA efficiency and transparency is actually one of ten reforms for the new MOFA stated by the Foreign Affairs Minister, Yoriko Kawaguchi. This was because she stepped into this position immediately after some scandals within the MOFA regarding ODA policy that caused the ministry to lose popularity.⁵² In order to obtain people’s trust in the ministry again, it was an urgent necessity for the MOFA to launch ODA reform. In other words, it was perfect timing for NGOs to make a move.

The ODA Town Meetings and *ODA Sogo Senryaku Kaigi* (ODA Comprehensive Strategy Conference) were held several times to hear public opinions. The ODA Town Meetings were open to the public and anyone could have a say. The Strategy

⁵¹ ODA-NET “Policy Recommendation for ODA Reform,” Policy Advocacy of ODA-NET, n.d., <<http://www1.jca.apc.org/oda-net/advocate/teigen.html>> (24 July 2003).

⁵² Scandals such as the NGO refusal incident in 2001, MP Suzuki’s ODA related money scandal in 2001-2 and the former Foreign Affairs Minister Makiko Tanaka’s money scandal which led to her resignation.

Conference was an exclusive meeting that only selected members could attend. The members consisted of governmental officials, three private sector personnel, two journalists, seven academics and two NGO staff members.⁵³ One of JVC's staff was selected as a member and presented their opinions at the meetings. This meeting convened 22 times over the two years.

Atsuko Isoda, the Vice-Director of JVC, and also a member of this meeting, later contributed an article on this series of meetings in JVC's magazine. She mentioned at the end of the article that the decision-making process of this meeting was totally unclear with insufficient discussion.⁵⁴ Based on her claim from actual participation in these meetings, the meeting was held more for the sake of the MOFA, in order to create transparency and accountability in ODA reform, than to involve public participation.

After the two years of planning, in August 2003, the MOFA announced a new ODA Charter as a part of major ODA reform. In the introductory part of the new charter, it says: "The objectives of Japan's ODA are to contribute to the peace and development of the international community, and thereby to help ensure Japan's own security and prosperity".⁵⁵ Surprisingly, it is clear that the new ODA Charter still emphasised the national interest of Japan in ODA policy, which had long been criticised by other aid donor states.⁵⁶ This is demonstrated in the portion of the charter which states: "it is important to have public support for ODA. It is essential to

⁵³ Atsuko Isoda, "ODA Sogo Senryaku Kaigi de Nani ga Hanasarete iruka (What has been talked about at a comprehensive strategy conference)" in Trial and Error 236 (January/February 2004), 2. Ms. Atsuko Isoda, a JVC member for the meeting, expressed a concern about the selection process as 'unclear and no apparent criteria for selecting people' in her article.

⁵⁴ Isoda, 2.

⁵⁵ MOFA, "Revision of Japan's Official Development Assistance Charter (unofficial translation)," Objectives, n.d., <www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/reform/revision0308.pdf> (15 August 2005).

⁵⁶ Isoda, "ODA Sogo Senryaku Kaigi de Nani ga Hanasarete iruka (What has been talked about at a Comprehensive Strategy Conference)", 2. Isoda revealed that it was strongly claimed 3 private sector participants at the Conference who rarely opened their mouths other than with this claim during other debates.

effectively implement ODA, fully taking into account the domestic economic and fiscal situation as well as the views of the Japanese people”. Also emphasised is the importance of the views of the Japanese people, described as follows:

The Government of Japan has revised the ODA Charter, with the aim of enhancing the strategic value, flexibility, transparency, and efficiency of ODA. The revision also has the aim of encouraging wide public participation and of deepening the understanding of Japan’s ODA policy both within Japan and abroad.⁵⁷

There are five main pillars in this charter: (1) supporting self-help efforts of developing countries, (2) perspective of “Human Security”, (3) assurance of fairness, (4) utilisation of Japan’s experience and expertise, and (5) partnership and collaboration with the international community. The two aspects, self-help and utilising Japan’s experience and expertise, are traditional and existed before the new charter. What this new charter made clear was that Japan would respond and contribute to the international community. This was described by using such contemporary global terms as ‘human security’ and ‘partnership and collaboration with the international community.’ Collaboration with NGOs is clearly stated under this category alongside with private companies.

The use of recent global terms frequently appears in this new charter. Examples are ‘poverty reduction’, ‘sustainable growth’ and ‘peace-building’. One needs to be careful about these terms used by governments since they could mean different things when used by NGOs. As Chapman and Fisher mention: “opponents may try to use similar

⁵⁷ MOFA, “Revision of Japan’s Official Development Assistance Charter (unofficial translation)”, Japan’s Official Development Assistance, n.d.
<www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/reform/revision0308.pdf> (1 August 2005).

tools for their own ends, thus confusing the public”⁵⁸, so the Japanese government could use these trend terms on purpose as a smoke screen to the people.

Attention should be paid to the term ‘peace-building’, as the MOFA made it clear that this is one of Japan’s priority issues in its official aid policy. This concept is constantly used when encountering international criticism of Japan’s foreign policy as being ‘faceless’ for not making a human contribution to international crisis scenes. The Japanese government says: “Japan will extend bilateral and multilateral assistance flexibly and continuously for peace-building in accordance with the changing situation, ranging from assistance to expedite the ending of conflicts to assistance for the consolidation of peace and nation-building in post-conflict situations.”⁵⁹ By using this argument, the Japanese government can legitimise sending the Self Defence Force (SDF) overseas in order to avoid having civilians face security risks. For safety reasons, the government does not send civilians into post-conflict areas on official missions. Like many other states, the Japanese government has sent the SDF to these areas. The trouble is, only the government could decide whether it is ‘post-conflict’ or not. In this case, the SDF may be sent to ‘post-conflict’ situations while there is still in a war. By doing so, it would breach Article 9 of the Peace Constitution, resulting in debate over the issue. This issue needs intensive analysis and discussion, most of which is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Positive and Negative Aspects of the New Charter

⁵⁸ Jennifer Chapman and Thomas Fisher, “The effectiveness of NGO campaigning: lessons from practice,” in Development and Advocacy, ed., Debora Eade (London: Oxfam Great Britain, 2002), 129.

⁵⁹ MOFA, “3. Priority Issues,” Japan’s Official Development Assistance Charter, (Tokyo: MOFA, 2004), 6.

In addition to those prominent points in the new charter, there appeared several positive and negative aspects when comparing it to the NGO recommendation. For the positive aspect, the new charter has included the ‘human security’ perspective, in which more value was placed on ‘Social Development’. The perspective of gender equality is also emphasised in “Basic Policies”. Other ‘trendy’ terms addressing global issues such as ‘poverty reduction’, ‘sustainable growth’ under “Priority Issues”, have also appeared in the new charter. However, there are also some concerns about the charter.

Establishing a single aid agency had long been a central concern for Japan’s foreign aid decision formation since it was distributed among too many actors and ministries, which were believed to obstruct the effectiveness of aid implementation (See **Chapter 3**: 75-76). NGOs favoured the establishment of a single aid administration. However, it was not mentioned in the new charter. Instead, it called for, “Collaboration among related government ministries and agencies”, and “Collaboration between government and implementing agencies” in “a unified and coherent manner”.

Public participation was another area which was emphasised in the new charter. The charter suggests the strengthening of human resource development and research, development education, information disclosure and public relations, but no mention is made of a participatory approach. This can be interpreted as meaning the Japanese people are still mere receivers of information, not participants in Japan’s aid activities. This is the same for local people in aid receiving countries, who will be merely ‘disseminated’ information regarding Japan’s ODA.

It is important to mention again, that the term, ‘peace-building’, is a major concern, which helped to send the Japan Self Defence Force to launch aid-like operations in

conflict affected areas. Under the peace-building scheme, ODA will be used to provide the following:

...assistance to facilitate the peace process; humanitarian and rehabilitation assistance, such as assistance for displaced persons and for the restoration of basic infrastructure; assistance for assuring domestic stability and security, including disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of ex-combatants (DDR), and the collection and disposal of weapons, including demining; and assistance for reconstruction, including social and economic development and the enhancement of the administrative capabilities of governments.⁶⁰

Amongst these ODA usages, there are some things that clearly require JSDF cooperation. Therefore, with anxiety over future active involvement of the JSDF in Japan's ODA activities, JVC has started pursuing policy advocacy activities such as symposiums, publications and consultation with politicians.

The new charter includes some compromises with NGO recommendations. However, there are still many challenges remaining for Japan's ODA, including the issue of SDF involvement in Japan's aid activities, JVC faces need to lead policy advocacy against these issues.

5.5 Conclusion: Taking a political position or remaining at the grassroots?

The style of JVC activities, and how it tried to make them effective, has been examined in this chapter. With several issues, from the financial situation to the slow outcome of policy advocacy activities, JVC has been pursuing its principle of making

⁶⁰ MOFA, Japan's Official Development Assistance Charter, 6.

Japan's ODA better by use of its reputation, experience and given opportunities under the Japanese government's new aid strategy, "Visible Japanese Aid", with NGO involvement.

It is clear to see that some modes of operation of JVC are distinguishable from those of Western NGOs or Asian NGOs; JVC has not been given the opportunity of being at official governmental meetings like Western NGOs, but by making meetings such as the NGO- MOFA Meetings 'visible to the public' through the internet or in quarterly magazines, it is possible to pressure the direction of the official aid policy in some cases. JVC is also eager to build networks, both internationally and domestically, in order to construct outside pressure (*Gai-Atsu*) that the Japanese government historically has responded to with sensitivity. While international networking can be observed in the Western NGOs, this is not the case for Asian NGOs, for fear of being suspected of 'selling out' their own countries as was seen in the Indonesian case.⁶¹

While JVC is distinguishable from Western NGOs, it has been operating much of its activities in accordance with the Western style. The big difference here is that JVC does not possess an institutionalised position to participate in high-level governmental meetings, which surely affects official aid policy decisions. So although JVC seems to operate as effectively as Western NGOs, the power to influence aid policy still remains on the government's side.

Concerns remain in terms of the future direction of JVC. According to Kumaoka, the Japanese NGOs community is at a crossroads of whether they would become political actors, or remain at the grassroots.⁶²

⁶¹ Seamus Cleary, The Role of NGOs under Authoritarian Political Systems, (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), 14.

⁶² Michiya Kumaoka, interviewed by the author, 17 June 2003. .

Involving politicians is one way to make NGO activities effective but this would risk the non-governmental status. Furthermore, if they lost their legitimacy as politicians, they also put the legitimacy of NGO activities at risk. A clear example was shown with the illegal usage of a salary of the political secretary of the former MP Kiyomi Tsujimoto in 2002.

As an outstanding operational NGO, the future of JVC indicates the direction of local Japanese NGOs. Although it has been trying to make a breakthrough in the established decision-making process, and produced some outcomes in cooperation with the Japanese government, it is still hard to change Japan's overall attitude to ODA. Refusing to be controlled by the government, JVC has slowly started drifting away from the centre stage of the Government-NGO partnership system. After a decade of honeymoon in terms of cooperation, the most powerful operational NGO in Japan has started going its own way.

Chapter 6

Case Study 2

Japan's Own Path in Aid? : Anti-Personnel (AP) Landmine

6.1 Introduction

On 3rd of December 1997, at the Ottawa Conference, the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs, Keizo Obuchi, signed the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (commonly known as the Ottawa Treaty), on behalf of the Japanese government. When the Japanese government signed the Ottawa Treaty, the world was taken by surprise, because Japan had shown uneasiness over the Treaty because of many 'national interests'. After signing the treaty, some actions have been undertaken by the Japanese government in order to clear Anti-Personnel (AP) landmines and support victims, such as a special aid scheme.

In the beginning, Japan's behaviour demonstrated its anti- treaty stance, which was clearly leaning towards that of the United States. So it was against expectation when Obuchi, signed the treaty.

There were some reasons for Japan to resist the global ban on AP landmines. The biggest of these reasons was Japan's national security issues, which are intimately related to its close relationship with the United States. The United States was opposed to the Ottawa Treaty from the beginning because of its international military strategy. Therefore, Japan naturally took the US position to the Ottawa Treaty by proxy.

Having realised Japan's uneasy attitude towards the landmine issue, 40 Japanese NGOs gathered to form a unified movement, which gave birth to the Japan Campaign to

Ban Landmines (JCBL), a national branch of International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). NGOs such as the People's Forum on Cambodia, the Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC) and the Association for Aid and Relief (AAR), which had already worked on the landmine issue joined together to lobby to the Japanese government. Their work, led by JCBL, moved the Japanese public to support the abolition of landmines. After many negotiations and campaigns organised by JCBL, the government made the decision to join the Ottawa Treaty and even set up a new scheme for removal of anti-personnel (AP) landmines and to support the victims in an Official Development Assistance (ODA) scheme, known as "Zero Victim Programme".

Surprisingly, it is less well known that it was a joint effort by Japanese NGOs that prompted the Japanese government to sign the treaty and take further action toward a global ban on AP landmines. JCBL used many official and unofficial interactions to pressure the central government to encourage Japan's participation. It is a very interesting case that several leading NGO practitioners and scholars have conducted study this issue such as Mekata (1998), Hirata (2002) and Osa (2003). However, many of them only told the story of the extraordinary success of the Japanese NGOs, and have not analysed the interactions of NGOs and the Japanese government sufficiently.

Therefore, this chapter will focus on the Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL) to analyse its mode of behaviour in influencing the aid decision-making process. This will reveal how it behaved in order to make the breakthrough which led Japan to sign the Ottawa Treaty. There are three reasons to make JCBL the second case study:

- 1) JCBL was specifically founded to address the landmine issue, combining a few organisations with the same interest.

- 2) As it is part of a network NGOs - the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), which originated in the United States - a study of JCBL will provide a comparison to Northern/ European NGOs.
- 3) JCBL has been one of the most powerful and influential NGOs in influencing Japan's landmine policy.

Through analysing the case, this chapter will reveal JCBL's effective interactions with the government on the specific topic of AP landmines, which is closely related to Japan's national security issue that the government surely wanted to keep from public scrutiny. In addition to the success of JCBL, other relevant issues, especially after 'September Eleventh' will be examined in the chapter as well.

6.2 What is the Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL)?

This section will analyse the history and organisational structure of JCBL in order to highlight its features. In order to do so, it is important to examine them from a global anti-AP landmine movement perspective, as JCBL was born as a national branch of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL). Therefore, this section will also first give an overview of the global movement prior to addressing JCBL itself.

6.2.1 The Global Movement

Why Should Anti-Personnel Landmines be abolished?

Why was the anti-personnel landmine (AP landmine) focused on in particular rather than many other weapons systems in the 1990s? The reason is the long-term activation and cruelty of AP landmines, which may make victims suffer permanently, if they are not instantly killed. The weapon became of international concern in the 1990s because it

began to affect development efforts in post-conflict countries such as Cambodia, Afghanistan, and Somalia because people were unable to access, or make use, of their land for fear of possible landmine explosions. A significant work on a global movement to ban landmines, *To Walk without Fear* (1998), describes the particular cruelty of AP landmines;

They cannot discriminate between a combatant or a civilian. While the use of the weapon might be militarily justifiable during the days, weeks, or even months of the battle, once peace is declared the landmine does not stop killing – a unique feature that has earned the landmine the moniker the ‘eternal sentry’.¹

To address the cruelty and huge impact on development in post-conflict states where people have started to re-build their lives, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) was formed in 1992 to promote a global ban on this weapon. The next section will give quick review of ICBL, a host campaign of JCBL.

International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL)

To realise a global ban on AP landmines, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) was formed from a coalition of six international NGOs² Following the establishment of ICBL, many national campaigns were founded and started their own campaign towards a global ban and JCBL was one of them. It was the start of a

¹ Maxwell A. Cameron, Robert J. Lawson, Brian W. Tomlin, To Walk Without Fear: The Global Movement to Ban Landmines (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), 21.

² These six international NGOs were Handicap International, Human Rights Watch, Medico International Mines, Mines Advisory Group, Physicians for Human Rights and the Vietnam Veterans of American Foundations.

very long path leading to the Ottawa Conference that declared a total ban on AP landmines and which achieved the goal beyond anyone's expectation at the time of ICBL's inception.

The Ottawa Process, which brought about the Ottawa Conference, was basically "a series of meetings designed to develop and negotiate the ban Convention as well as build the political will to sign it."³ It was mainly driven by ICBL and a few friendly governments. In terms of the campaign, although the movement to ban landmines had ICBL as a centre body and Williams as the coordinator, each national campaign operated on its own agenda because each state had its own atmosphere for NGOs. Some were friendly while others were adversarial. It is described as follows:

While united behind the call for a ban, this vast and diverse coalition has been tremendously flexible in its day-to day work...member organizations were few to pursue the achievement of the campaign's goals as best fit their own mandate...

It was clear that NGOs in the developed North, with their political culture of NGO/government dialogue, would not engage their governments precisely the same way that NGO partners in emerging democracies would.⁴

In its campaign, ICBL itself sponsored a number of activities to influence governments toward the global ban. They included organising an international coalition, travelling to build personal relationships, publishing documents for public awareness, as well as information sharing with each member of ICBL. The most important aspect of

³ Cameron, Lawson and Tomlin, To Walk Without Fear: The Global Movement to Ban Landmines, 36.

⁴ Cameron, Lawson and Tomlin, 22.

ICBL activities was its cooperation with UN agencies such as United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and the pro-ban governments:⁵

The much remarked upon close co-operation between governments and NGOs during the Ottawa Process was more the result of face-to-face meetings than anything else. From its very beginning, the ICBL has been built on networking, both individual and organisational.⁶

The “face-to-face meetings” helped to build mutual confidence between ICBL and government leaders, but also allowed ICBL to cooperate with ‘authority’, which secured its institutional credibility. It is considered that back up from ‘authority’, makes organisations more eligible for outside funding. Securing the credibility of an organisation is an important point for Japanese NGOs since the government does not spend taxpayers’ money in vain.

Each national campaign has implemented its own advocacy activities. For instance, the Italian national campaign cooperated with a TV talk show and the staff of a mine industry to appeal for the global ban and organised a demonstration to pressure the Italian government. The Swedish national campaign pushed the Swedish parliament to vote for the global ban on landmines, which pressured the government.⁷ The French movement launched a global ban on landmines campaign named the “Coward's War” and gathered signatures. The French campaigners also held a number of meetings with

⁵ Cameron, Lawson and Tomlin, 28.

⁶ Cameron, Lawson and Tomlin, 25.

⁷ Japan Campaign Ban Landmines (JCBL), “Kakkoku Kyanpeen (Each national campaign),” Newsletter 13, June 2000, 5.

government ministries and gave seminars at the government offices about AP landmines issues to encourage the government towards a pro-ban policy.⁸

The movement for the global ban on landmines was not undertaken only in the West, but also in Asia, where there are many landmine-affected countries. Cambodia, for example, held the third ICBL conference in its capital city, Phnom Penh in June 1995. The Cambodian campaign also operated a massive signature gathering campaign at the same time. By the end of the conference, the campaign gathered 340,000 signatures including that of King Sihanouk. This success inspired other national campaigns around the world. Here again, an advantage of an international coalition appears to be that they learn from each other.

On this free basis of activities for each national campaign, JCBL had to search for its own mode of campaign. As repeatedly described, although Japan is a part of Western nations, most notably shown as a member of G-7, the political culture surrounding NGOs is far from friendly. Chapter 3 of this thesis has already shown the Japanese government's way of exerting influence and controlling NGOs. However, JCBL has found the way to pressure the government, and it has resulted in Japan being one of first parties to sign the Ottawa Treaty. The next section will analyse the mode of behaviour of JCBL on Japan's own policy towards the movement to ban landmines.

6.2.2 The History of JCBL: Born from a Domestic Coalition

The Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL) was formed in July 1997, which was late in comparison to other national campaigns. In order to understand the background of JCBL, it is necessary to address Japan's position towards the AP

⁸ Cameron, Lawson and Tomlin, To Walk Without Fears: The Global Movement to Ban Landmines, 28.

landmine issue since its ambivalent attitude gave birth to JCBL and also opened a door to its further activities. Therefore, this section will address Japan's changing position towards the AP landmine issue at first and then overview and analyse the history and the organisational structure of JCBL.

The Japanese government showed a difficult and contradictory attitude towards the global movement to ban landmines from the very start and hesitated to make an active commitment. It changed positions frequently and JCBL had to keep pace with the frequent changes in the government's attitude.

At first, Japan made the following statement of its active attitude towards a global ban on mines at the Lyon Summit in 1996: "Japan supports international efforts towards a global ban on anti-personnel landmines"⁹. The Japanese Prime Minister once again made an official address to support the total ban at the United Nations General Assembly in September. In March 1997, the then Prime Minister (PM) Ryutaro Hashimoto even hosted the Tokyo Conference on Anti-Personnel Landmines with the participation of 27 states and 10 international organisations. At the Conference, Japan declares, "...the participants noted the need to make efforts to work towards the total ban on anti-personnel landmines"¹⁰. However, at the same time, the Japanese government showed a passive attitude toward the Ottawa process, which was already suggested to the world by the Canadian government in October 1996.¹¹

⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA), "Japan's Decision to Support a Global Ban on Anti-personnel Landmines," G7 Lyon Summit Information, n.d., <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/economu/summit/1996/landmines.html>> (11 July 2003).

¹⁰ MOFA, "Tokyo Conference on Anti-Personnel Landmines Chairman's Summary," 7 March 1997, <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/landmine/ky_conf97/summary.html> (5 March 2004).

¹¹ JCBL, Jirai to Ningen- hitorhi hitori ni dekirukoto (Landmines and Human: what can individual do) (Tokyo: Iwanami Syoten, 2003), 35.

There was a reason for Japan's ambiguity. Having been a close ally of the US, Japan was siding with the US's attitude toward the treaty.¹² Japan and Australia were labelled as the countries uncertain about the global ban on mines. The United States, Russia, China, India, and Pakistan, most of which were major actors in international relations, were considering refusing to sign the treaty.¹³ The US government, especially, was reluctant to participate or sign the treaty unless reservations were allowed for the Korean Peninsula and anti-tank mines. Later, US President Bill Clinton made a comment on the US's withdrawal from the proposal of the treaty saying, "as Commander in Chief, I will not send our soldiers to defend the freedom of our people and the freedom of others without doing everything we can to make them as secure as possible."¹⁴

The possession of AP landmines by the United States army based in Japan under the U.S.- Japan Security Treaty was another area of concern for the Japanese government.¹⁵ Because of the possession of landmines by the US armies within its border,¹⁶ the Japanese government was unable to clearly show its attitude towards the issue of banning mines. It showed concerns in regard to the possession of AP landmines at the US bases in Japan on the following three aspects: Japan's authority to remove the AP landmines from the US army, use of AP landmines by the US army located in Japan and

¹² JCBL, 35.

¹³ JCBL, "Nihon no Ayumi (Japan's action)", JCBL Newsletter 3, July 2003, 5.

¹⁴ Clinton's comment was quoted in Cameron, Lawson, and Tomlin, To Walk Without Fear: The Global Movement to Ban on Landmines, 233.

¹⁵ The treaty was signed between Japan and the United States in 1951 to allow the US army to be based in Japan even after the signing of San Francisco Peace Treaty to secure peace and security in Japan. Under this treaty, the US armies were located in Okinawa, Yokosuka, and Iwakuni.

¹⁶ The US government has not disclosed its information about landmines possessed by the US armies in Japan. JCBL gathers information from an international NGO, Human Rights Watch. (Yasuhiro Kitagawa, interviewed by the author, 14 December 2003)

the transport of AP landmines from the US bases by Japanese personnel.¹⁷ In summary, the Japanese government showed strong hesitation on this issue in response to the US bases in Japan.

In this difficult situation, JCBL was formed by several Japanese NGOs that were already working on the issue separately and were concerned about the uneasiness of the Japanese government towards a global movement to ban mines. The establishment of the organisation was decided at a conference organised by several Japanese NGOs, the ‘NGO Tokyo Conference on Antipersonnel Landmines: Toward a Total Ban on Antipersonnel Landmines’ in [March 1997](#). At the conference, an appeal to move the Japanese government to sign the treaty was undertaken, and also launched the Japanese Campaign to Ban Landmines to undertake an integrated operation from several NGOs such as AAR. This was the official start of JCBL.

Despite its late start, there were already many NGOs which were working on AP landmine issues such as AAR, JVC, and the People’s Forum on Cambodia (PFOC). So when JCBL was established, some core members already had rich experience in landmine issue. Yasuhiro Kitagawa, the director of the People’s Forum on Cambodia, who had worked in Cambodia as an electrician, became the leader of the JCBL. His strong leadership was based on his actual experience in Cambodia and sympathy towards landmine victims and played a crucial role in JCBL activities. The next section will examine the organisational structure of JCBL and reveal its strengths.

¹⁷ For more detailed explanation of the Japanese government’s concern regarding the US bases in Japan in terms of anti-personnel landmines, refer to Hirata (2002): 120-121.

6.2.3 Organisational Structure of JCBL

As mentioned earlier, the hesitation of the Japanese government to support the global movement to ban mines created the unfriendly political atmosphere towards the NGOs. Needless to say, it is better to have a friendly authority than hostile one. But it could work in reverse and “hold organisations together often in the face of adversity”¹⁸, which is often observed in NGOs working in Asian states. JCBL also held organisations and people close together and managed to succeed in changing the course of the government. It made full use of the advantages of its organisational structure, networking nature, a fast and flexible decision-making process, a simple but strong operational target and strong leadership and strength of members.

The Nature of Networking: Collaborating and Sharing

The major peculiarity of JCBL lies in its networking nature. As shown in the case of the Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC), networking creates mutual benefits for participating NGOs through the exchange of information, human resources and actual office facilities. Some NGOs, such as JVC and AAR, have particularly close relations with JCBL, therefore they support each other’s activities through several means, including writing favourable articles in their own magazines, as well as holding campaigns and activities together. By this type of networking, the insufficient number of staff of JCBL (which only totalled two) was supplemented with irregular staff from other organisations. Having people from different organisations helped JCBL to relate to even stronger organisations with various skills and experiences. This helped JCBL

¹⁸ Ian Smilie and John Hailey, Managing for Change: Leadership, Strategy and Management in Asian NGOs (London: Earthcan, 2001), 50.

and other related organisations to exchange their strengths and fill any gaps in their activities.

Networking with other organisations with established reputations gave JCBL a certain form of credibility and legitimacy. ICBL built its network system with the United Nations agencies to gain credibility. Being a national campaign of ICBL, JCBL gained legitimacy when ICBL was given a Nobel Prize in 1997.

The Simple and Strong Activity Target of JCBL

JCBL has set out three primary aspects of its campaign; 1) lobbying the government, 2) sharing and providing information, and 3) building networks with overseas organisations. There are tactics to implement each of the three targets. Three tactics were undertaken for advocating to the government; a) cooperating with the mass media to build favourable public opinion for JCBL's cause, b) a signature collecting campaign, and c) putting on workshops and symposiums for Members of Parliament (MPs) and governmental officers.¹⁹ Publishing newsletters of information from other domestic and international groups was also adopted as a means of information sharing.²⁰ By building networks internationally, JCBL gained strength through mutual cooperating. By setting these clear activity targets, JCBL managed to concentrate its activity on them, something which many other NGOs fail to do and lose their goals.

The JCBL administration was fully run by donations from 1) membership, 2) individual donors and 3) projects implementation. The number of members and the amount of donations increased as the AP landmine issue received public attention.²¹ It

¹⁹ JCBL, "JCBL no Katsudo Hooshin (JCBL's tactics)," Newsletter Preparation version, August 1997, 1.

²⁰ JCBL, Newsletter Preparation version, 1.

²¹ Yasuhiro Kitagawa, interviewed by the author, 14 May 2003.

has only applied for the governmental subsidies for campaign activities, despite the importance of the issue.

Leadership

Yasuhiro Kitagawa, a leader of JCBL, was a crucial figure in Japan's campaign to promote the government to sign and ratify the Ottawa Treaty. He had worked in Cambodia, the state most affected by AP landmines, in the 1960s and he has worked on the issue ever since, motivated by his strong concerns for the victims. Other than JCBL, he has organised and directed several other NGOs in Japan and his rich experience and personal enthusiasm for the issue has gathered people. Toshihiro Shimizu, another leading person in JCBL, also has experience of working in Cambodia.

What these charismatic leaders are faced with today is how to pass on leadership to the next generation of the organisation. As already analysed in the previous chapter, it is never easy to change a charismatic leader to a more bureaucratic leader within organisations. This issue is not unique to the Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC) and JCBL. Many other Japanese NGOs experience this as the first generation leaders come closer to their retirement.

6.3 Interactions of JCBL

6.3.1 Signing the Ottawa Treaty: Using various interactions

In order to change the course of the government in favour of banning landmines, JCBL used various types of interactions. These types of interactions are personal relationships, symposiums and workshops, publications, campaigns and networking and petitions. This section will examine these interactions by JCBL towards signing the

Ottawa Treaty by following Japan's see-saw policy changes towards AP landmines. The structure of this chapter will be different from that of JVC, since JCBL specialised in one topic, so it is clearer to analyse JCBL's activity as one story, rather than categorising their interactions as with JVC.

. Having known the difficult attitude of the Japanese government, JCBL employed several strategies to boost its activity to move the government to sign the Ottawa Treaty. Collaborating with Members of Parliament (MP) was one of them. This collaboration was implemented through working together with a non-partisan groups of MPs to ban landmines. This was called *Taijin Jirai Zenmen Kinshi Giin Suishin Renmei* (a League of Diet Members to Promote a Comprehensive Ban on Antipersonnel Landmines: "the League" will be used in this chapter for the organisation hereafter). The League was unique for having an NGO member turned MP as a leading person. This connection bonded JCBL and the League very closely.

In cooperating with MPs, three targets were set by JCBL such as 1) demanding the PM's decision on a total ban, 2) lobbying the Defence Agency²², and 3) demanding a change in attitude of the US government through mutual exchange between the MPs of Japan and the US.²³ JCBL followed these targets one by one through the League. The importance of this relationship soon appeared. MP Gen Nakatani, who was the vice president of the League and was in collaboration with JCBL, submitted a request to sign the Ottawa Treaty at the Prime Minister's official residence on 19th of August. If it were only JCBL personnel who attempted to hand a paper in, they would not have had access to the residence. That is because, in Japan, NGOs have a very limited institutionalised way of accessing the government directly.

²² The Japanese Defence Agency was the one of the opposition forces to signing the Ottawa Treaty.

²³ JCBL, NewsletterPreparation Version, 1.

JCBL submitted another request for the Japanese government to take part in the Ottawa Treaty with no reservations on August 30, 1997. The request had the signatures of 56 groups and it was to be delivered to the Prime Minister (PM) Ryuichiro Hashimoto. One thing to mention here is that the signatures were collected from organisations of the same interest, but not from the public. That means the campaign of JCBL had not penetrated the Japanese public at this stage. Therefore, JCBL's next task was to raise public awareness in Japan.

It was the work of AAR, an NGO collaborating with JCBL on the issue that raised public awareness by publishing a picture book, *Jirai deha naku, Hana wo kudasai (Not Mines, But Flowers)* in 1996. Children read the book and then talked about the story with their parents, who eventually became interested in the issue. It was a powerful tool to influence the public broadly, and as the book sold well, the politicians became also interested since parents are voters.

Meanwhile, there occurred an important step in the international arena for the Ottawa Process. On the last day of the Oslo negotiation (18th September, 1997), which was a prior international negotiation concerning the banning of mines, a proposal for the Convention (treaty) on a global ban on AP landmine was adopted. Eighty-nine governments came to the Oslo negotiation and they were greeted by NGOs and people from all around the world demanding the negotiation be conducted with 'no loopholes, no exceptions, and no reservations'. As a result, in Article One of the general obligations, the treaty clearly states that "Each State Party undertakes *never* under any circumstances:

- a) To use anti-personnel mines;

- b) To develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer to anyone, directly or indirectly, anti-personnel mines;
- c) To assist, encourage or induce, in any way, anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Convention.”²⁴ (Italics added by the author)

After blindly following the US government, Japan suddenly decided to participate in the Oslo conference. Jinbo (1997) bitterly comments that some mass media welcomed Japan’s decision and praised it as wise and brave, but Japan and the United States were regarded as disrupting the process.²⁵ The countries demanding reservations, such as the US, China, Russia, and Japan had withdrawn from the convention proposal.

Around this time, two events happened which were important for the global movement to ban mines. They were the sudden death of Princess Diana in August, who was well known for her action towards banning landmines, and an award of the Nobel Peace Prize to the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) in October. The death of Princess Diana attracted media attention toward the movement to ban landmines and the Nobel Prize award gave the movement legitimacy and authority. Networking worked for JCBL this time, as JCBL, part of ICBL, gained this legitimacy and authority in Japan all of a sudden.

In addition, a very fortunate situation occurred in Japan for JCBL around this time. Keizo Obuchi, known for his strong sympathy towards AP landmine victims, became the Minister for Foreign Affairs. He made a prominent statement on 17th November

²⁴ Handicap International, “General Obligations: Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction,” Summary, 7 July 2000, <www.landmine.ro/legislat4.htm> (18 March 2006).

²⁵ Tetsuo Jinbo, Jirai report (Landmine Report) (Tokyo: Tukiiji Syokan, 1997), 286.

1997 that said it was illogical that Japan was disagreeing with the treaty and clearing landmines in Cambodia at the same time.²⁶ He also said that Japan would have to follow the current international trend and consider signing the treaty against the government's policy.²⁷ Osa (2003) analysed this official statement by Mr. Obuchi, stating "it could be a completely unexpected slip of the tongue for those pro-the US government."²⁸ Obuchi became a key person in the later stage of Japan's policy toward the global ban on landmines and it will be analysed later in a framework of leadership.

Yet, there was an ambiguous force in Japan. The very next day after the Oslo proposal was adopted, the Japanese government presented a report on anti-personnel landmines, named the "Current Situation and Problems". In the report, Japan made a clear standpoint in a global ban on AP landmines. "Japan thinks that to step up international efforts in the following four areas are important. (a) Efforts towards achieving a global ban on anti-personnel landmines..."²⁹ In the same report, Japan's efforts toward a global ban on landmines were described as follows;

(a) At the G-7 summit held in Lyon in June 1996, Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto expressed support for international efforts toward a global ban on landmines and announced that Japan had decided to take a series of measures on its own initiative.

²⁶ His comment was quoted in Yukie Osa "Iraku Senso to Tai-jin Jirai no Haiki kanryo (The Iraq War and completion of abolition of anti-personnel landmines)," Sekai to Gikai (The World and the Parliament) (June 2003): 23.

²⁷ Osa, 23.

²⁸ Osa, 23.

²⁹ MOFA, "Anti-personnel landmines: Current Situation and Problems," 27 November 1997, <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/landmine/current.html>> (5 March 2004).

(b) Japan participated in the international conference on the global ban on anti-personnel landmines organised by the Canadian government in October 1996.

(c) Japan co-sponsored the U.N. resolution on An International Agreement to Ban Anti-Personnel Landmines adopted by the U.N. General Assembly in December 10, 1996. This resolution urged the pursuit of international agreement to ban anti-personnel landmines.

(d) Japan has been participating in international efforts to achieve a global ban on anti-personnel landmines at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva and through the Ottawa Process.³⁰

It is interesting to observe the contrast between the comment by Obuchi and this official statement. It shows the clear contradiction that Japan was facing.

Despite the convincing statements that emphasised Japan's attitude toward the Ottawa Treaty, the government's attitude was still of hesitation towards the signing of it, and as a result, it received continual criticism for siding with the US government. ICBL has named Japan as the only country supporting the US concept of trying to make the Korean Peninsula an exemption in the treaty.³¹ Motoko Mekata, a former AAR staff and a founding member of JCBL received an email from ICBL claiming that Japan was siding with the US government and spoiling the Ottawa Treaty with the possibility of adding reservations.³² She mentions that the Oslo Conference, which was a previous

³⁰ MOFA, 5 March 2004.

³¹ JCBL, "ICBL no Hookoku (ICBL Report)," Newsletter: Special Edition, September 1997, 5.

³² JCBL, "Oslo kaar no Hookoku (Report from Oslo)," Newsletter 2, September, 1997,3.

international conference on the mine issue, was all about “how Japan acts badly”.³³

This resulted in pungent criticism that made it necessary for JCBL to take urgent action.

JCBL and other related NGOs were deeply concerned about the attitude of the Japanese government and decided to start a campaign to lobby the government with public support. JCBL coordinated a campaign of collecting signatures from Japanese people to inform the government that it had public support behind its activities.

Collecting signatures is thought to be one of the most effective tools for policy advocacy in Japan, where NGOs possess little official access to the central authority.

The other advantage of signature collection campaign is information sharing. Through signature collecting, JCBL was able to share information about the landmine issue with people which gave feedback about the activities. As well as fulfilling the strategy of advocating to the government, JCBL also educated people which inspired interest in people.

Improving the organisation’s own image was used as a strategy to dramatise the campaign. JCBL invited a Cambodian landmine victim, Tun Channalet of ICBL with the help of a Catholic group to Japan in November 1997. He had lost both legs in a landmine accident in 1982 and his figure in a wheelchair directly demonstrated the cruelty of AP landmines. Channalet toured all over Japan to give seminars on what the landmine issues were, what people could do and how to achieve these goals. As a result, the campaign had collected 35,283 signatures by 15 November³⁴, which was a huge

³³ JCBL, “Oslo kara no Hookoku (Report from Oslo),” NewsLetter 2.5, September 1997:,3.

³⁴ JCBL, “1997 nen no JCBL no Katsudo (JCBL activities in 1997),” Newsletter: Special Edition, (December 1997), 6.

number for Japan, where often people hesitate to identify themselves in political action.³⁵

This time, with a large number of signatures, Tun Channalet handed the petition to Keizo Obuchi in person along with two other Members of Parliament,³⁶ and demanded again Japan's participation in the Ottawa Treaty without any reservations. He certainly made a strong impression on Obuchi, as he later recalled when he met the then Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, "He had tears in his eyes and said 'landmines have to be abolished'".³⁷

These efforts by JCBL and other cooperating NGOs and people changed the course of the Japanese government toward the AP landmine issue. Obuchi signed the treaty with no reservations in Ottawa. He stated at the Ottawa Signing Conference;

The decision to sign the Ottawa Treaty was not an easy one because the signing of this milestone treaty is very closely related to our national defence. But as a country making vigorous demining efforts, Japan has made the decision to sign it for the high cause of humanitarianism.³⁸

³⁵ Some reasons can be considered for the Japanese people's hesitation towards giving signatures, such as disclosing personal details. Another reason is they are not keen on appearing to be siding with particular political action for fear of being tracked down in case the action turned against the authority. It was said that the Defence Agency made a list of people who required information disclosure according to the Free Access to Information Law Act (Mainichi Newspaper, 28 May 2002). There are several other examples regarding information disclosure on personal details, which were not supposed to be open at all.

³⁶ JCBL, "Channalet shi ni yoru Syomei Teisyutsu (Petition handed in by Mr. Channalet)," Newsletter: Special Edition, December 1997, 3.

³⁷ JCBL, "Tun Channalet shi heno Intabyuu (Interview with Mr. Tun Channareth)," Newsletter 13, June 2000, 4.

³⁸ MOFA, "Address by Mr. Keizo Obuchi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Ottawa Signing Conference December 3, 1997," Japan signed the Total Ban Treaty on Anti-Personnel Mines, 3 December 1997, <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/landmine/otawa97/address.html>> (15 July 2003).

The then Minister for Foreign Affairs also noted the visit of Channareth in his speech and concluded; “every time I think of the many victims of landmines who like these people have overcome their hardship to live with such vigour, I renew my determination to tackle the landmine problems.”³⁹ At this conference, the Japanese government declared that it would set up a new scheme named the “Zero Victim Programme” within its Official Development Assistance (ODA). It stated that “Japan is determined to work positively on this matter in cooperation with other countries so that this goal of “zero victim” can be achieved as early as possible in the 21st century.”⁴⁰

6.3.2. Ratifying the Ottawa Treaty: Collaborating with Politicians

Japan’s sudden signing of the Ottawa Treaty was a surprise to the world. As Williams and Goose (1998) have described in *To Walk without Fear*; “it seemed at this point extremely unlikely that Japan would sign the ban treaty. But in a rather startling public statement, not long after the Peace Prize, Japan’s newly appointed Foreign Minister, Keizo Obuchi, announced his intention to review Japanese policy with a mind to being able to sign the treaty.”⁴¹ After having urged the Japanese government to sign the Ottawa Treaty, the next goal for JCBL was to promote the government to ratify the Ottawa Treaty.

The timing was fortunate for the movement to ban mines. At this time, Keizo Obuchi, the former Minister for Foreign Affairs had become the Prime Minister, and made the decision to join the Ottawa Treaty. His personal interest in and sympathy

³⁹ MOFA, “Address by Mr. Keizo Obuchi, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan Ottawa Signing Conference December 3, 1997”, (15 July 2003).

⁴⁰ MOFA, 15 July 2003.

⁴¹ Cameron, Lawson and Tomlin, To Walk Without Fear: The Global Movement to Ban Landmines, 46.

towards the AP landmine issue and victims created the time for the movement to ban mines. JCBL mentioned his importance in realising Japan's early ratification as follows:

The PM Obuchi has been enthusiastic and planning Japan's early ratification of the Ottawa Treaty. He was getting vexed at a delay in administration within the government for the ratification, so our signature collection was received with enthusiasm as a means to encourage administrators.⁴²

At this stage, the AP landmine issue was crucial for the Japanese government in terms of linking it to other foreign policy concerns such as post-conflict reconstruction and development.⁴³ It became the centre stage for Japan to show its presence in the international scene through making a commitment to AP landmines, which was a great humanitarian concern. However, Japan's next move to ratify the Ottawa Treaty was slow despite the dramatic signing of the Treaty. Hirata (2002) analyses this as, 1) not being able to spend enough time on the landmine issue since the nuclear test explosion was conducted by India and Pakistan and the government's focus was more on that issue, and 2) the Japanese government was concerned about the treatment of AP landmines on US bases in Japan once Japan ratified the Treaty.⁴⁴ To move the hesitant government to ratify the Treaty as soon as possible, JCBL had to use various interactions to promote the government to move forward to ratification.

⁴² JCBL, "JCBL activities 1998," <<http://www.jca.apc.org/banmines/organisation/record.html>> (10 May 2004).

⁴³ MOFA, *Japan's ODA 1998*, (Tokyo: APIC, 1999), 45.

⁴⁴ Hirata, *Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo's Aid and Development Policy*, 120.

Major JCBL activities at this time included a new campaign of signature collection and collaborating with politicians. Having been able to influence the government with the signature gathering campaign, JCBL launched a second campaign in April 1998. As a result, it collected more than 200,000 signatures from the public in six months, which were submitted to the Prime Minister on 11th September.

For the signature campaign, JCBL tried to intercept and collaborate with politicians. There were already some politicians working on this issue, but among them, Yukihiro Fujita of the League played an important role in the ratification campaign. In June 1998, a questionnaire survey about the AP landmine issue was undertaken among members of the parliament. The object of this survey was information sharing amongst the MPs and to change their views towards the ratification through proving them with more information from JCBL.

With the support from the League, a series of petitions were turned in to the Cabinet, including the PM himself and leading members of each political party. In July, JCBL submitted a petition for an early proposal of a bill related to the Ottawa Treaty to the newly established Obuchi administration.

In addition to the signature campaign, JCBL also held some other public campaigns such as a poster competition (September to November) and participating in an international cooperation festival in October. The annual international festival was especially an important occasion to attract the general public to the issue and raise their awareness. A symposium on AP landmines was also held in June. As analysed before, hosting symposiums means both arousing public awareness and pressuring the government by making the issue public and official.

As a result of these campaigns led by JCBL, in cooperation with politicians, the Japanese government was pressured to ratify the Ottawa Treaty on 30th September 1998. Japan's ratification came in 45th place out of all participating states. With more than 40 state ratifications, the Ottawa Treaty came into effect on 1st March, 1999.

6.3.3 How Have They Done It? JCBL centred actions to promote the government

The case of Japan's sudden signing of the Ottawa Treaty and its ratification illustrates a successful example of a Japanese NGO's advocacy work, although the process of making the government sign the treaty without any reservations was not easy. Interactions by JCBL have already been discussed in the above analyses, but five features are deduced and summarised in addition to the effective advocacy.

- 1) Using domestic and international networks,
- 2) Obtaining public support through campaigns, workshops and symposiums,
- 3) Cooperating with MPs, a major actor in Japan's decision-making process, to make a breakthrough,
- 4) Making the campaign visible by using an icon (visit of Tun Channalet),
- 5) Building a personal relationship with authorities such as Keizo Obuchi and politicians,
- 6) Publishing a translation of *Landmine Monitor*, an annual report on landmine issues, and undertaking monitoring activity.

Firstly, it utilised both domestic and international networks. JCBL has used domestic and international networks to obtain support and also influence that they have lacked in terms of their relationships with the government, such as outside pressure (*Gai-Atsu*). It was a powerful back up from ICBL for JCBL because ICBL had already

established orthodoxy in the area at several international occasions such as conferences.⁴⁵ In addition, as ICBL was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1997, it gave it more strength for each national campaign. JCBL also cooperated with a Korean Campaign to Ban Landmines and launched a joint postcard campaign in 2002. This cooperation in the campaign also helped each other to build networks. Secondly, signature collection educated people. The more they know about the landmine problems and its victims, the more the public providing support that NGOs could receive as national consensus. A growing number of signatures was strong evidence of the public support. Besides the signature collecting, many symposiums/ workshops and publishing of works were also undertaken that also helped to inform people about the issue.

Thirdly, collaboration with Members of Parliament (MPs) cannot be ignored in JCBL's activities. MPs naturally consider their next elections and frequently come up with policies that contribute to supporting themselves, but pictures of landmine victims were too terrible to ignore. Some MPs organised the non-partisan working group and by using their insider position in the decision-making process, they exerted influence on the government, such as making queries at official meetings. As stated above, when the signature collection was submitted to Obuchi by Channalet, two MPs accompanied him. Fourthly, the visit of the landmine victim apparently made the Foreign Minister sympathetic towards landmine victims, which led him to take a stronger position on the global ban on landmines.

As the fifth point, strong leadership has also played a crucial role. At that moment when Japan was showing an ambiguous attitude, the two most powerful men in Japanese politics had special interests in the landmine issue. Both the Prime Minister

⁴⁵ Jinbo, Jirai Report (Landmine report), 291.

Hashimoto and the Minister for Foreign Affairs Obuchi had personal feelings about the landmine issue. Obuchi's personal sympathy has already been discussed. Hashimoto committed himself to gathering the ashes of Japanese troops in Saipan, and visiting a mine field in the Korean Peninsula. Mekata (1998) points out especially, the importance of Obuchi, who sympathised with AP landmine victims and understood the importance of the issue.⁴⁶ MP Yukihiisa Fujita, one of the active members of the non-partisan working group on AP landmines also regarded his personal emotion as important for joining the Ottawa Treaty.⁴⁷ Osa (2003) comments;

Japan is not the only one country that has a sensitive relationship with the US government, there are some other countries as well. However, having delicate foreign relations and facing strong opposition from army-related power, people regard the AP landmine issue as a humanitarian issue and politicians, who are not afraid of taking risks in each state made brave decisions on the total ban on AP landmines.⁴⁸

Sixthly and lastly, JCBL keeps informing the Japanese public of AP landmine issues by publishing a translation of the annual *Landmine Monitor*. A Press conference is usually held when the translation comes out and JCBL takes advantage of the opportunity to cooperate with the media. Through providing inside information obtained by JCBL to the media, JCBL is hoping the media to keep AP landmine issues alive in the media.

⁴⁶ Motoko Mekata, *Jirai naki Chikyu he - Yume wo Genjitsu ni shita Hitobito (The World without Landmines: Dream Makers)* (Tokyo: Iwanami, 1998), 230.

⁴⁷ His comment was quoted in JCBL, "Symposium," *Newsletter* 6 (December 1997), 3.

⁴⁸ Osa, "Iraku Senso to Tai-jin Jirai no Haiki kanryo (The Iraq War and completion of abolishment of anti-personnel landmines)", 25.

6.4 Japan's Aid Policy on AP Landmines after the Ottawa Convention

Keizo Obuchi, the Minister for Foreign Affairs at the time of the Ottawa Conference and the Prime Minister after that, pledged a special aid scheme on AP landmines to show Japan's support for global mine ban movement. It is called the "Zero Victim Programme". The amount of aid given to the landmine issue has totalled 5,499 million JPY (equivalent to \$ 494 US million) up to 2002.⁴⁹ With this amount, Japan has become the top donor of all aid donors in relation to the landmine campaigns. As a result, aid allocation in the landmine issue has reached 10,340 million JPY (2003) and therefore, the promise of providing 1,000,000 million JPY by the Foreign Minister has also been met within the five years.

Japan may seem to be making substantial progress on landmine issues, however, Japan's aid policy has not been developed to keep up with JCBL's expectations. While it is true that the aid amount reached the goal set by the Prime Minister in 1997, its allocation was heavily concentrated on areas where the Japanese government had its own foreign policy interest.

Criticism arose against Japan's style of providing aid in the AP landmine issue from the very start. After the announcement of the "Zero Victim Programme" in December 1997, the Japanese government had provided 100 million JPY (equivalent to USD 865 million) among six countries and multilateral agencies.⁵⁰ According to JCBL's own data examination, bilateral aid was only for mine clearance activity in Cambodia and other funding was through multilateral aid. On this partiality, Toshihiro Simizu, a JCBL staff member, bitterly comments on the government funding situation that only operated 'indirectly' through multilateral agencies such as the United Nations. He considered

⁴⁹ JCBL, "Zero Victim Program (Zero Victim Programme)," Newsletter, 27, September 2003, 13.

⁵⁰ JCBL, "Zero Victim Program nit suite (About Zero Victim Programme)," Newsletter 14, September 2000, 4 - 5.

that this showed the government was just trying to spend a certain amount of 1000 million JPY in a promised time of five years as was declared.⁵¹

JCBL Newsletter, volume 14, presented an overall result and analysis of Japan's aid provision in the AP landmine scheme. According to its examination, aid was provided among 17 countries in 1999. Around the amount of JPY 160 million was distributed among multilateral agencies such as the United Nations, Organisation of American States (OAS), and the International Committee of the Red Cross. The amount for multilateral institutions was increased by 1.5 times in comparison to that of 1998.⁵² The overall comment concluded that this situation that characterised Japan's ODA tended to flow funding through governmental bodies or semi-governmental entities of AP landmine relations. Therefore, the funding tended to go for mine clearance projects rather than supporting victims. JCBL criticised this phenomenon as against the third content of the programme, "Assistance to the Victims of the landmines".⁵³

Including this aid provision, there are some issues that JCBL currently faces. They will be discussed in the next section to reveal a new challenge for JCBL, which had once achieved a significant result in Japan's foreign policy in the 1990s.

6.5 At the Turning Point: New challenges for JCBL

In addition to the questionable provision of the aid for the AP landmines clearance and victim support, there are five other major issues that JCBL has been addressing. These issues are: losing public attention, disappearance of high-powered persons, organisational survival after the completion of the special aid scheme, possession of AP

⁵¹ JCBL, "Shimizu Ypshihiko kara Hitokoto (A comment by Toshihiro Shimizu of JCBL)," Newsletter, 9, May 1999

⁵² JCBL, Newsletter, 14, 4.

⁵³ JCBL, Newsletter 14, 4.

landmines by the US army located in Japan, and the Japanese government's new attitude towards the "War on Terror" since 2001.

The first issue is the loss of attention on the issue. The Japanese public attention toward the AP landmine issue suddenly grew to a large extent immediately before the signing the Ottawa Treaty in 1997. The passion, however, was also fast to disappear after the ratification of the Treaty in 1998. JCBL is now struggling to maintain the public awareness of AP landmines, and it has shifted the focus to cluster bombs by recognising them as another form of AP landmines.⁵⁴

It is argued that one reason for the fast disappearance of public enthusiasm in Japan towards the issue comes from the lack of spontaneous interest from Japanese people in the first place. The sudden rise of the public interest in this issue shows it was caused not by a spontaneous growth of interest, but mostly by external factors such as the death of Princess Diana and the Nobel Prize award to JCBL's host organisation.⁵⁵ The efforts of JCBL and other network NGOs were undeniable, but Keizo Obuchi, who was a key figure as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan and later the Prime Minister, made the issue crucial to Japan, though he was moved by hidden NGOs efforts.

The other possible reason for the lost interest in AP landmines in Japan can be a shift in foreign policy by the government towards a more active international contribution after "September Eleventh" in 2001, by sending the Self Defence Force

⁵⁴ JCBL, *Jirai to Ningen (landmines and human beings)*, 66 -69. The similarity of cluster bombs and AP landmines is described as, "it can be said that there is broad agreement that cluster munitions that fail to explode as designed, do function similarly to antipersonnel mines." (source from Mines Action Canada, "Cluster Bomb" <http://www.minesactioncanada.org/documents/ct_cb_7June01htm>, [6 October 2005])

⁵⁵ In committing to the cluster bomb issue, JCBL faces a reduction of impact of ICBL for its back up because ICBL stated it would concentrate on the AP landmine issue, but did not have a formal advocacy on cluster bombs. The decision was made at ICBL Coordination Committee meeting in September 1999 and the information was updated on the JCBL homepage. Refer to JCBL, "ICBL Position on Cluster Bombs," *Cluster Bombs*, 11-12 September 1999, <www.jca.apc.org/landmines/> (17 March 2006).

(SDF) overseas. The government was eager to make a contribution to the so-called “Peace-Building” field of foreign policy. This is because sending SDF overseas presents an ever stronger presence of Japan in the international community as another form of “Visible Japanese Aid”. It can be easier to highlight Japan’s contribution to the outside with Japan’s national flag attached than by cooperating with NGOs.

Particularly, enthusiastic attention was given to Afghanistan, and this eagerness was shown in chairing the conference on Afghanistan recovery in December 2001. The landmine issue was included in the topics of the conference.

Tokyo’s sponsorship of the first big international conference of Afghan non-governmental organisations which began yesterday, and a ministerial-level summit for donor countries in January, point to a more active role for Japan than in past international conflicts.⁵⁶

One important point here is that a part of the funding for the “Zero Victim Programme” was also going to be spent in a post-conflict Peace Building scheme in Afghanistan.⁵⁷

There was a high number of landmines laid in Afghanistan, so this is not saying that the funding was out of the parameters of the programme because it was still valuable for removing them and supporting victims in Afghanistan. However, the point is that the funding was not purely for the AP landmine issue, but also for the sake of Japan’s new aid policy line, Peace Building strategy. Because the need for peace building in Afghanistan occurred within the five years of the time the Japanese government

⁵⁶ Alexandra Herney, “Tokyo poised for rebuilding role HUMANITARIAN AID,” Financial Times, 12 December 2001, 8.

⁵⁷ JCBL, Newsletter, 27, 13.

promised to provide funding, this aid to Afghanistan seems to mark the end of this programme.

In order to maintain interest in the AP landmine issue by the Japanese public, JCBL now has a *Katari-be Koza* (speakers training course) for young people. The course is to train young people to be able to give a public talk about the AP landmine issue around the world and JCBL also aims to encourage young people be more interested in the issue through the course, to hand down the activity as well as maintain concerns among them.

The second issue – the disappearance of influential people from the AP landmine scene - is also crucial. Keizo Obuchi, whose personal sympathy toward the AP landmine issue was one of the major driving forces, suddenly died in 2000. After his death, the subsequent administration showed no further aid strategy towards the AP landmine issues after completing five years of the “Zero Victim Programme” at the time of 2003. Although there are countless AP landmines still laid in the world, the government official concerned stated that a further aid provision would be considered “case by case”, which meant there was no plan at the moment but maybe in the future.⁵⁸ JCBL has been keen to explain the importance of continuing aid provision to AP landmine areas and has tried to pressure the government to make an official announcement for further aid strategies, but has not been successful so far.

Depending too much on collaboration with MPs can also be risky. They face elections eventually, and when they are not re-elected, they turn out to be nothing more than ‘ordinary people’. Yukihiisa Fujita of the League, who contributed to the ratification of the Ottawa Treaty, lost the election in 2000 (re-elected in 2003). He

⁵⁸ JCBL, *Jirai to Ningen – hitori hitori ni dekirukoto (Landmines and Human: what can individuals do?)*, 38.

opened the door for JCBL to access the authority. Therefore, with his disappearance, JCBL lost one an important point of access to the decision-making process.

The third issue is related to the use of aid to a develop landmine clearance technology. Japan declared further funding of 500 million JPY in research and development of new technology for demining in December 2000. JCBL has concerns about this because, “it would benefit primarily private companies and that Japan would not have competitive advantage in development of demining equipment over experienced Western countries.”⁵⁹

Japan is well-known for its high-technology production, so it is natural for Japanese construction firms to penetrate into a new business field with their advanced technology. JCBL, however, considered that enough technology and equipment has already been given by ICBL and other states, and commented as follows:

Japan showed interest in producing main clearance technology. However, the new technologies already provided the result that they were not effective compared to ones brought by ICBL and European Committee. Continuous use of already existing technology is important and not inventing new ones.⁶⁰

The fourth issue is about the possession of AP landmines by the US army stationed in Japan. The issue was already an obstacle for the Japanese government joining the Ottawa Treaty in the first place. Even after signing and ratifying the Treaty, the

⁵⁹ International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) Landmine Monitor Report 2001: Toward a Mine-Free World, (New York: Human Right Watch, 2002), 461.

⁶⁰ JCBL, “Jirai Jyokyo Kyoryoku nit tsuite (About cooperation in destruction of landmines),” Newsletter, 18, September 2001, 6.

Japanese government refuses to disclose information on AP landmine possession by the US army.

The Landmine Monitor Report 2001 has addressed the US AP landmine problem in Japan. It says;

Japan did not report in any of its three Article 7 reports the presence of US antipersonnel landmines in Japan. The US is believed to have some 115,000 self-destructing antipersonnel mines stored in Japan, and perhaps some portion of the 1.2 million non-self-destructing antipersonnel mines that the US is retaining for use in Korea.⁶¹

In this regard, even though the Japanese government has declared the completion of its mine destruction, it does not mean ‘every landmine has been destroyed’. The claim made by the MOFA in this respect was that, Japan had to understand that the US government needed to possess landmines to protect its own soldiers.⁶² The implication of this was that *the soldiers were supposed to protect Japan* under the US-Japan Security Treaty. It was clear that the MOFA was repeating the claim made by the US government.

The last issue of concern is regarding the Japanese government’s active attitude to the “war on terrorism” after “September Eleventh”. As the ‘international community’ led by the United States, has declared “War on Terror”, the Japanese government has shown enthusiastic participation and sent the Self Defence Force (SDF) to Iraq for Peace Building purposes. It was obviously an attempt to overcome “the Gulf War

⁶¹ ICBL, *Landmine Monitor Report 2001: Toward a Mine Free World*, 458.

⁶² JCBL, “Nihon Seihu no Kenkai (A comment by the Japanese government),” *Newsletter: Special Edition*, 6.5, July 2004, 5.

Trauma” in order to receive appreciation by the international community, especially the United States (See **Chapter 1** for “the Gulf War Trauma”). There is a concern with regard to this strategy, that if Japan continues to play an active role in international Peace Building schemes, there will be a possibility of operating in unstable areas that AP landmines would become ineffective in terms of securing the SDF’s operational areas. The direction of the government is yet to be observed carefully but it has to bear in mind that there is a dangerous possibility.

6. 6 Conclusion: “Did JCBL make the breakthrough in the decision-making process?”

JCBL’s activities in the 1990s were successful in terms of pressuring the Japanese government to change its attitude toward the Ottawa Treaty. Conversely, regarding Japan’s aid policy in the AP landmine issue and continuing current issues, it is hard to say whether it was successful or not.

JCBL has greatly influenced and moved the government to sign (1997) and ratify (1998) the Ottawa Treaty using several effective interactions. This includes using the international network with ICBL and the domestic networks with fellow Japanese NGOs. In addition, several other circumstances sided with JCBL, such as the Peace Nobel Prize for ICBL that impressed the Japanese government, which was sensitive towards international criticism.

Building a personal relationship with Keizo Obuchi, who personally gave sympathy to AP landmines victims, helped JCBL to access the central authority. The MP Fujita also played a crucial role in bringing the government to participate in the global movement. He was closely connected to JCBL and other associating NGOs. JCBL

made a good use of the media, such as publishing newsletters and books and inviting a high-profile person from overseas to highlight its campaigns. Through these various interactions, JCBL seemed to have made a breakthrough in the established decision-making process in Japan and achieved its goal.

However, in line with Japan's aid implementation in AP landmines, JCBL can hardly be said to be as effective. Although the Japanese government has set up the aid scheme for AP landmines, it was made use of for implementing a post-conflict Peace Building scheme, Japan's new aid policy line. The JCBL was unable to influence the Japanese government concerning the possession of AP landmines by the US armies in Japan. It can be considered that this was connected to Japan's national security situation which constitutes an important factor in the decision-making in terms of bureaucracy and politicians. That is, addressing the issue could violate the bilateral relationship with the US government.

Based on these reasons, the following consequence can be drawn: The Japanese government still considers its national interest most in its foreign aid policy, despite its continuous reverse claims. Although there are still serious issues around AP landmines, Japan has terminated its aid activities and no further aid is planned for the time being.⁶³

Considering the situation around it, JCBL is now at a turning point. In terms of relations with the government, JCBL keeps pressuring the programme. However, the Japanese government has made it clear by holding a completion ceremony in 2003⁶⁴ that the AP landmine issue in Japan had been solved, not to mention the US armies' possession of AP landmines in Japan. If there is to be no further aid strategy from Japan,

⁶³ JCBL, Jirai to Ningen – hitori hitori ni dekirukoto (Landmines and Human : what can individuals do), 37-38.

⁶⁴ JCBL, Jirai to Ningen – hitori hitori ni dekirukoto (Landmines and Human : what can individuals do), 65.

it is difficult for JCBL to commit its activities to the government. Especially since the government feels it has fulfilled its own responsibilities by signing and ratifying the Ottawa Treaty and completing the destruction of AP landmines in its own hands. The possession of AP landmines by the US army within Japanese border is still a debatable issue, but the Japanese government prefers to remain silent.

While it may sound like an exaggeration, the objectives of JCBL remain important to educate people both inside and outside Japan about AP landmines. For example, JCBL has started a new project to train storytellers among interested people. Its aim is to raise the awareness of people about AP landmines and also stop the issue from being forgotten. While acknowledging the importance of these awareness raising projects, it is clear that JCBL is now being pushed aside from centre stage in dealing with the AP landmine issue in Japan.

Chapter 7

Case Study 3

Environmental Conservation Strategy: Ideal Collaboration?

7.1.1 Introduction

The previous two case studies have discussed how the Japanese government attempted to practise a new aid strategy, “Visible Japanese Aid (VJA)”, and the impact of Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) participation. This third case study will be discussed in light of the other new foreign aid strategy of Japan in the 1990s, which was ‘environmental conservation’. Japan’s foreign aid provision in the environmental field increased to about 4000 million JPY in 1996 (**Appendix 2: Figure 5**). NGOs were heavily involved in this new strategy as well as in cases which were discussed in the previous chapters. The unique difference in this chapter is that NGOs were given a clear opportunity to take part in the decision-making process to bring about a new environmental policy for Japan’s aid strategy. This chapter will analyse this ‘environmental conservation’ scheme of Japan’s foreign aid and the mode of operations of the NGOs involved.

Two Japanese environmental NGOs will be focused on in this chapter: Greenpeace Japan (GP Japan) and Friends of the Earth Japan (FoE Japan). They are both among the top environmental NGOs in Japan and each has brought about a significant change in Japan’s environmental policy and its related aid scheme in the 1990s. This chapter will examine the impact on the Japanese government made by NGO interactions through GP Japan, and the establishment of a new guideline for Japan’s environmental policy with NGO participation through FoE Japan. For these analyses, this chapter sets two objects:

- 1) to study environmental NGOs’ impact on governmental policy and Official

Development Assistance (ODA) through examining their interactions and 2) to analyse whether the Japanese government has really gained a favourable international reputation in the environmental area not only in terms of monetary power, but also in taking an active role in solving problems.

The chapter will start with the background of Japan's environmental policy to reveal why it became one of the more important aspects of Japan's aid policy and contributed to "Visible Japanese Aid (VJA)". This will be followed by analysis of the interactions and impacts of the two environmental NGOs in order to satisfy the aforementioned objectives. Through this analysis, this chapter will reveal the mode of operations of environmental NGOs that made a seemingly more effective breakthrough, in comparison to the previous two cases, in the established decision-making process.

7.1.2 Background of Japan's Environmental Policy in the 1990s

Highlighting Its Name at International Conferences

The Peace Constitution and its concerns for neighbouring Asian states, which suffered from Japan's aggression during World War Two, caused Japan to be hesitant about playing an active role in current international relations, which often requires military action. In global environmental issues, on the other hand, Japan could play an active role because the issues are devoid of any armament involvement that Japan would be unable to provide. In addition, the issues involve fewer political aspects such as refugees and human rights problems, which were often the subject of simmering debate at the United Nations and issues that Japan often falls between the West and Asian states in respect to.¹ Among these major issues discussed in the international

¹ For instance, Japan positioned itself between the Western nations and Asian states in terms of the human rights issue when the international debate started to simmer. The former possessed a concept

arena, the environmental field was considered as the only area where the Japanese government could strongly voice its attitude toward the outside world. Therefore, it was a great opportunity for the Japanese government to regain a favourable reputation in the international arena after its humiliation during the Gulf Crisis. Based on that, it was natural for Japan to become eager to show its contribution to global environmental issues.

At first, the Japanese government tried to highlight its presence at international conferences on the environment by holding them themselves and making statements of strong commitment. Japan made a clear statement of its commitment to global environmental problems at “Our Common Future” in 1987 held by the World Commission on Environment and Development, which was actually advocated by Japan. It stated that it would expand its Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the environmental field.

Financial assistance has been recognised as an important aspect of the contribution of Japan’s environmental policy for a long time:

Japan’s assistance in the environmental field has traditionally included cooperation in such areas as environmental conservation projects and human resource development.

of ‘global human rights’, but the latter supported ‘Asian Values’ or the ‘human right to live’. Despite its close ties as a major donor with the United Nations,, which firmly supports the ‘global human right’ from the Western perspective, Japan rarely makes its standpoint clear. Its deep concern arises for the following two reasons: 1) sensitivity towards Japan’s past aggression in violating the human rights of people in Asian states occupied by the Japanese military, 2) fear of ‘political refugees’ flowing into Japan because their ‘global human rights’ have been violated in their own countries. In line with the second reason for hesitation toward accepting the ‘global human rights’, the prospect of a refugee problem displays Japan’s uneasy attitude. As a matter of national policy, Japan rarely opens itself to accepting refugees. By not accepting refugees, Japan is in no position to make active statements on this issue.

The provision of both financial assistance, and also technical support based on knowledge and experience gained through long years of effort in the area of environmental protection, will be a vital element in Japan's future efforts to contribute to the world.²

Furthermore, "it is likely that in the future, aid from developed countries to developing countries will be a key to solving issues related to environmental preservation on a global scale."³ With regard to the financial assistance, at the Paris Summit in 1989 Japan resolved to use ODA for environment purposes, strengthening Japan's environmental ODA to 300 billion JPY for three years. It was the first concrete financial move from the country. At the same summit, "Environmental ODA policy" was also declared to represent Japan's attitude of utilising its financial power for environmental conservation promotion. There were three points in this new strategy:

- 1) In dealing with global environmental problems, it is necessary to support environmental conservation efforts in the developing countries. Consequently, Japan will expand and strengthen bilateral and multilateral aid in the environmental field up to the approximate amount of JPY 300 billion over the next three years.
- 2) Japan will deal positively with cooperation in the conservation and research of forests, particularly topical forests, and with cooperation for improving the ability of developing countries to cope with environmental problems. In this connection, Japan will promote measures to help the poor farmers by taking into account poverty and other problems that are the basic causes of tropical rain forest losses, step up

² Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA), Japan's ODA 1991, (Tokyo: APIC, 1992), 136.

³ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1992, (Tokyo: APIC, 1993), 143.

technical cooperation in human resources development in developing countries' environmental field, and make better use of international development finance organisations.

3) Japan will make further efforts to expand and strengthen measures giving consideration to the environment.⁴

In the same year, Japan hosted the Tokyo Conference on the Global Environment and Human Response toward Sustainable Development. As was shown in the previous case study on anti-personnel landmines and as will be shown on Japan's hosting of the Conference of the Parties (COP) 3 later, being a chair for an international conference was regarded as a major contribution to the field by the government.⁵

Much effort was made by the Japanese government at these international conferences using the power of money (ODA). However, Japan made a big mistake at the biggest environmental conference, the United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED) in 1992. The mistake led Japan to a second attempt at adopting a crucial protocol in 1997 to try and regain a positive reputation from the international community. The next section will discuss Japan's failure at the UNCED, an example which displays Japan's traditional method of conducting foreign policy.

Failure at the Earth Summit: Domestic issues have a priority for Japan

The United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development (UNCED),

⁴ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1993, (Tokyo: APIC, 1994), 176.

⁵ MOFA, "Cikyu Kankyo Mondai to Wagakuni no Gaiko (Global environmental issues and our foreign policy)," <<http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/kankyo/genjyo.htm>> (14 February 2004).

which was held in 1993 in Rio de Janeiro, was also called the “Earth Summit”. The conference was the biggest global conference ever on environmental issues with 182 participant states and 102 leaders. At the conference, a number of important international declarations and frameworks were established, such as the Rio Declaration, Agenda 21, the Convention on Biological Diversity, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

Japan, as a top donor of foreign aid in a total quantity at the time of 1992, was expected to play an active role in this field with its economic power.⁶ In addition to the international expectation, Japan’s past history of getting over domestic pollution problems in the 1970s⁷ gave it the confidence to play a crucial role in confronting environmental matters.

Based on its intention to highlight Japan’s active contribution to this cause, a new environmental aid strategy was presented in their official address to the Summit by the Japanese government. A major aspect of the proposed new strategy was to expand Japan’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) up to one trillion JPY over the following five years.⁸ In *Japan’s ODA 1992*, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) proudly quoted an article of the Reuters News Agency to demonstrate Japan’s contribution to environmental conservation as follows:

Reuters News Agency, for example, released a wire on June 14 1992 to the effect that

⁶ Kokuren Kankyo to Kaihatsu Kaigi (United Nations Conference on Environment and Development),” Asahi Simbun, 13 June 1992,

⁷ Japan had experienced a number of public pollution problems and related diseases in the 1970s such as *Minamata* disease (Kumamoto), *Itai-itai* disease (Toyama), *Yokkaichi* asthma (Mie). All these issues became court cases and the Japanese government made apologies and compensated victims.

⁸ MOFA, Japan’s ODA 1993, (Tokyo: APIC, 1994), 48.

“the world leadership Japan showed in its pledge of environmental assistance was encouraging. UNCED, while expected to be the first step in rescuing the planet from destruction, has served to expose the ill-preparedness of the nations of the world. In that context, [Japan’s new monetary goal] in the last stage of this conference was a breath of good news.”⁹

Despite the positive official statement, in reality, Japan not only failed to show its ‘face’ as an active player, but also it was given the shameful “Golden Baby Award” by international NGOs for being unable to advance things on its own and being dominated by other powers such as the United States.¹⁰ What went wrong at the Summit?

Japan showed its priority was still its domestic stability rather than global issues through the Prime Minister’s absence from the Earth Summit. The possibility of the absence of the Japanese PM, Kiichi Miyazawa, from the UNCED was leaked by media just two days before its start. A reason for the possible absence was that he would have to attend the Diet for a discussion about a Peace Keeping Operation (PKO) and legislation (“Law Concerning Cooperation for the United Nations Peacekeeping Operation and Other Operations”).¹¹ Domestic discussion on this topic was crucial at that time because it was the first time Japan had decided to send its Self Defence Force (SDF) overseas since its foundation - even under the United Nations. By not turning up for the Summit himself but rather attending the domestic debate, the Japanese PM was

⁹ MOFA, Japan’s ODA 1992, (Tokyo: APIC, 1993), 144.

¹⁰ Kenichi Miyamoto, “Rondan,” Asahi Simbun, 11 December 1997, 29.

¹¹ Syusyo UNCED kara Kesseki (Prime Minister will be absent from UNCED),” Asahi Simbun, 10 June 1992, 1.

seen to have placed a higher priority on this domestic issue to stabilise his position, than on global concerns.

The Japanese government knew that it would damage Japan's image if the head of the state did not appear, considering the importance of the "Earth Summit" to negotiating global issues. However, on 11th of June 1992, the PM Miyazawa officially commented that he would be unable to take part in the Summit but was considering the possibility of attending via vision or voice message as a compromise.¹²

Yet, even the 'voice attendance' option was not taken. *Asahi Simbun* reports that Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) prepared a video recording of the Prime Minister's speech to be played at an official address at the conference. However, the video speech was suddenly terminated when it came to Japan's turn. It was said that the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Boutros-Ghali, would not treat the Japanese government differently from other participating states.¹³ Some said that national leaders specially made time to attend the Summit although they were extremely busy, and if they could have made a recorded address, they certainly would.¹⁴ MOFA staff were said to have been in panic at the time and distributed papers of the official address at the conference site as a last resort to compensate for the Prime Minister's absence.

It is rather strange to find in *Japan's ODA 1993* that it was written as if Miyazawa had actually attended the Summit to make the official address. It is stated as:

In an address delivered at the meeting of UNCED in 1992, then Prime Minister

Kiichi Miyazawa of Japan stated to the effect that Japan would try to sharply increase

¹² Syusyo Video de UNCED ni Syusseki (Prime Minister will attend via video speech)," *Asahi Simbun*, 11 June 1992, 1.

¹³ Confusion at Prime Minister's video speech," *Asahi Simbun*, 14 June 1992, 2.

¹⁴ *Asahi Simbun*, 14 June 1992.

its bilateral and multilateral environment related aid to the tune of JPY 9000 billion to 1 trillion over the five years from FY 1992.¹⁵

An accurate explanation for not stating the fact of the Prime Minister's absence has not been given anywhere; however, Japan's ODA reports, especially the English versions are frequently used to "advertise" Japan's foreign aid strategy. They do not always reflect the facts. The way in which the Japanese government's absence was covered up in the official report highlights the importance of its need to attend such conferences to save Japan's 'face'.

With regard to Japan's absence at the UNCED, critics said that Japan had lost its best opportunity for *Syusyo-Gaiko* (the Prime Ministers' foreign negotiations). This type of negotiation is usually carried out through giving an official address to clarify the state's standpoint or meeting other leaders face-to-face before or after conferences to build mutual understanding. This opportunity could have been realised at the Earth Summit if the Prime Minister had attended, which could have brought a huge advantage for Japan in showing its presence.¹⁶ Japan not only missed its chance to display its importance in the international arena, but also gained a bad name as a 'self-centred' state for prioritising a domestic issue, the PKO, ahead of global concerns such as the environment.

Adopting the Kyoto Protocol: Retrieving an honour

Having failed to promote Japan's name at the UNCED, the country was left

¹⁵ MOFA, *Japan's ODA 1993*, (Tokyo: APIC, 1994), 48.

¹⁶ *Asahi Simbun*, 14 June 1992, 2.

searching for another opportunity to regain its reputation as an active leader in the environmental field. If the situation was left as it was, Japan would suffer from another “Gulf War trauma”. The next opportunity came in 1997 when the third Conference of the Parties (COP), an international dialogue on climate change, was held in Kyoto.

Japan made a clear statement on environment issues at the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the Environment and Development (UNGASS), prior to the COP 3. The PM Ryuichiro Hashimoto announced the Japanese government’s “Initiatives for Sustainable Development toward the 21st century (ISD)”, which had five key points:

- 1) Measures to fight air and water pollution,
- 2) Global warming,
- 3) Water issues,
- 4) Protection of the natural environment, and
- 5) Environmental education.¹⁷

There is one global environmental aspect missing from these points: over population. Although the Japanese government recognised that over-population often underlies and worsens environmental problems¹⁸, and often occurs in the Least-Less Developing Countries (LLDCs) who were in the most need of aid, the issue was not included among the five aspects. This is because the over-population issue sometimes relates to

¹⁷ MOFA, Japan’s ODA 1997, (Tokyo: APIC, 1998), 24.

¹⁸ Jessica T. Mathews, “Redefining Security,” Foreign Affairs, 68, no. 2 (Spring 1989): 168. She described a spread of “environmental refugees” as follows: “Whenever refugees settle, they flood the labour market, add to the local demand for food and put new burdens on the land, thus spreading the environmental stress that originally forced them from their homes.”

immigration issues for those who are pushed out of their homelands, an issue the Japanese government has taken steps to avoid.

The other point to be mentioned in Japan's standpoint was a continuous Asian concentration for its environmental aid. The Japanese government justified this as follows:

One additional noteworthy feature of Japan's ODA policy is its fundamental orientation toward Asia....For some years now, Asia has been a scene of dramatic economic growth. That trend, however, has triggered an array of discernible environmental strains ranging from pollution to over-logging, to the contamination of the seas. Unless it can pursue its economic development hand in hand with serious efforts to address its environmental woes, Asia could conceivably compromise its own chances for sustainable growth...¹⁹

The COP 3 was the third international conference to discuss climate change and it sought to adopt a protocol. Upon its adoption, the protocol was to be named after the hosting city, which was Kyoto, the old Japanese imperial city. Therefore, the Japanese government had to take any risk to adopt this protocol as it was a good means of highlighting Japan's contribution to the environmental field.²⁰

In addition, Hatano (1997) analyses reasons why the Japanese government was eager to chair the COP3 according to the following four points:

¹⁹ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1998, 28.

²⁰ The Environmental Agency, ed., Kyoto Giteisyo to Watashi-tachi no Cyosen- Kiko Hendo ni kansuru Kokusai Rengo Wakugumi Jyoyaku ni motozuku Dai Ni-kai Nihon Hokokusyo (The Kyoto Protocol and our efforts: the second national report on the UNCED), (Tokyo: Ministry of Finance Press, 1998), 2.

- 1) The Environment Agency of Japan showed an eagerness for hosting,
- 2) A great opportunity to educate or enlighten Japanese people about environment issues,
- 3) The possibility of the Japanese government being pressured by academism, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and also politicians,
- 4) A rare chance for Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) to play a significant role at the United Nations.²¹

Based on Hatano's analysis, it is not difficult to draw conclusions about the Japanese government's desire to host the conference. It was mainly driven by domestic demands to take advantage of the COP 3 to announce Japan's eagerness in the environmental field, rather than tackling actual environmental issues.

The government also made use of this opportunity to educate and enlighten Japanese people about the possible use of new energy, such as nuclear power. The Environment Agency has written an interesting document on how nuclear power could reduce the danger of global warming.²² One can guess that the government has used environmental education as an excuse to justify the usage of nuclear power, which Japanese people are often very critical about because of the memory of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The COP 3 itself faced a number of difficulties. The main reason for these

²¹ Toshio Hatano, "Kyoto Giteisyo (Kyoto Protocol)", Asahi Simbun, 1 December 1997, 4.

²² The Environment Agency, Kyoto Giteisyo to Watashi-tachi no Cyosen- Kiko Hendo ni kansuru Kokusai Rengo Wakugumi Jyoyaku ni motozuku Dai Ni-kai Nihon Hokokusyo (The Kyoto Protocol and our efforts: the second national report on the UNCED), 146.

difficulties was that each participant state had its own interest to consider with regard to allowable levels of gas emissions. No matter whether they were a developed or developing country, they all hoped for a continuation of the economic growth that had been brought by industrialisation. Moreover, the industrialisation process is considered to require a certain amount of gas emission. Broadly speaking, there were three key points argued in the COP 3:

- 1) How much each state has to cut back on gas emissions,
- 2) What kind of gas emissions are to be decreased,
- 3) North-South confrontation as to who holds the responsibility for the past global warming.

Of these three points, the third point, the confrontation between North-South became the most severe obstacle at the negotiations. The South (developing countries) has claimed, “developing countries have taken the view that their right to develop should not be restricted, and that the burden of environmental preservation should fall on the developed countries which are responsible for the deterioration.”²³ On the other hand, the North (developed countries) has recognised that “the burden should therefore be distributed fairly.”²⁴ As the hosting country, with a desire to have a protocol adopted in its name, Japan had to lead this confrontation towards successful agreement at any cost. A major tool for Japan to do that was again monetary power.

²³ MOFA, Japan's ODA 1992, (Tokyo: APIC, 1993), 143.

²⁴ MOFA, 143.

“Carrots and Carrots”: Japan’s new environmental aid strategy

Japan realised that this North-South problem could be the crucial obstacle for a successful conclusion to the COP 3. Failure of the conference would result in the protocol being unable to be named after Kyoto. In order to ease the confrontation, the Japanese government offered a new scheme of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to developing countries.

...Japan will offer the most favourable conditions (0.75 percent interest rate and a 40 year repayment period) on yen loans for projects designed to address global warming in the developing countries.²⁵

Projects that qualify for this loan included; (1) energy saving technologies; (2) new and renewable energy sources; (3) forest conservation and afforestation; and (4) the reduction of air pollution.²⁶ The MOFA proudly says that “yen loans for such projects in advanced developing countries will be offered at a preferential 1.8 percent interest rate and 25 years repayment period.”²⁷ This repayment condition is no worse than the general Yen Loan, which has a 34 year repayment period and a 1.4 percent interest rate.²⁸ This notwithstanding, a question posed here is, ‘Why does it have to be a loan, and not a grant?’ The answer to this question remains unknown and it shows, again, Japan’s lack of altruism philosophy in its foreign aid strategy.

This offer of a low-interest, long-term repayment yen loan caused a stir among

²⁵ MOFA, Japan’s ODA 1998, (Tokyo: APIC, 1998), 54.

²⁶ MOFA, 54.

²⁷ MOFA, 54.

²⁸ Toshio Watanabe and Yuji Miura, ODA Seihu Kaihatsu Enjyo (ODA: Official Development Assistance), (Tokyo: Cyuukoshinsyo, 2003), 38.

developing countries. *Asahi Simbun* states that some developing countries showed appreciation for the offer but refused because of the requirements regarding gas emissions.²⁹ There was also a poignant criticism from them accusing Japan of attempting to win them over, simply to pass the ‘Kyoto’ protocol.³⁰

In conclusion, it can be said that by hosting the COP 3 and thereby securing the protocol with the name of its old imperial city, the Japanese government has shown its ‘face’. However, whether it was a successful face, or failed face remains questionable. Hayakawa (1998) judges Japan’s hosting to be a failure by quoting negative reactions from other official envoys and international NGOs.³¹ Although Japan had an opportunity to highlight its contribution and to receive an international reputation for strong leadership, it once again did not succeed due to its hypersensitivity toward other powers.

The next section will analyse how Japanese environmental NGOs have pressured the Japanese government at these international conferences to reveal their modes of operations. A new guideline for the environmental assessment of Japan’s Yen Loan projects that achieved a higher standard than expected will also be examined because without NGOs’ contribution, the guideline would not have been established to this extent.

²⁹ Hatten Tojyo koku ha Shincho na Shisei (Developing countries’ hesitation),” *Asahi Simbun*, 8 December 1997, 11.

³⁰ Kyoto Giteisyo kara no Nihon no Kitai (Japan’s expectation from the Kyoto Protocol),” *Asahi Simbun*, 8 December 1997, 16.

³¹ Tsunetoshi Yamamura, ed., *Kankyo NGO- Sono Katsudo, Rinen to Kadai* (Environmental NGOs: their actions, philosophy and tasks), (Tokyo: Shinzansya, 1998), 79.

7.2 Japanese Environmental NGOs: They watch, monitor and campaign

As global concerns over environmental issues grew following the Earth Summit, the number of international NGOs focusing on environmental issues also grew. Iriye (2002) defines the Earth Summit as a changeover point for this growth stating that, “the 1992 conference was notable in the history of international nongovernmental organizations because their representatives were included in at least fourteen official delegations”³² ...“moreover, a large number of environmentally oriented nongovernmental organizations – as many as 1,420 of them, according to a study – gained access to the preparatory meetings that preceded the Rio conference.” There is no doubt that since this Summit, NGOs have become major actors in the environmental area and that has continued to the COP 3 in Kyoto.

Japan also saw the rapid growth of environmental NGOs in the 1990s. The government stated the importance of involving NGOs into Japan’s foreign aid policy.³³ As for Japan’s environmental field, two NGOs can be listed as outstanding and influential; Greenpeace Japan (GP Japan) and Friend of the Earth Japan (FoE Japan). Both have relatively short histories in Japan but have worked effectively throughout the 1990s to push the Japanese government for better environmental policy by using

³² Akira Iriye, Global Community: The role of international organisations in the making of the contemporary world, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 178.

³³ The government stated that, “Social development projects, including poverty alleviation and environmental conservation, constitute a steadily increasing share of Japan’s overall assistance to developing countries. For this reason, there is a growing demand for finely tuned assistance that directly reaches local populations. Consequently, NGOs have been playing an increasingly important role in the process of economic cooperation and there is a growing need for collaboration with NGOs in the implementation of ODA projects.” See MOFA. “Partnership with Japanese NGOs under ODA,” ODA&NGO, n.d., <www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/seisaku/seisaku_1> (7 February 2003).

various types of interaction. The work of FoE Japan, in particular, constituted a critical part of the decision-making process in establishing Japan's new environmental guidelines for the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

This section will focus on the aforementioned two environmental NGOs in Japan and analyse their interactions with the central authority. In this analysis, GP Japan will be used as a case study to illustrate its modes of pressuring the Japanese government and the case of FoE Japan will reveal its interactions with the government in setting up the new guidelines. When necessary, comparison with GP International and FoE International will be undertaken in order to make the Japanese interactions clearer. Through these two case studies in which they managed to influence the decision-making process will be analysed.

Strictly speaking, these two NGOs are not purely of 'Japanese' origin since they originated from already established international environmental NGOs. However, this thesis defines them as 'Japanese' for analysis because much of their activities are carried out in the Japanese political culture and they deal with the Japanese government. They may use strategies learnt from their headquarters (which will be analysed in this chapter), but the nature of their organisations is 'Japanese' in this sense.

7.2.1 History and Structures of Greenpeace Japan and Friends of the Earth

Greenpeace Japan

Greenpeace Japan (GP Japan) was established in 1989. Needless to say, it started as Japan's local branch of Greenpeace, which is a world-wide environmental NGO, well known for its direct and non-violent actions. Its activities are also well known as they are eye-catching and attracting media attention based on its policy, "Out of Sight, Out of Mind". Examples are sailing into nuclear test sites, parachuting from smokestacks,

and filming whaling.

The characteristic attractions of its activities are described as follows:

Greenpeace is able to capture media attention because its actions are visually spectacular...The urge is lustful because it requires the novel, the unusual, the spectacular. The eye cannot satiate itself on the familiar, the everyday, the normal.

Greenpeace actions excite the eye.³⁴

Despite its short history in Japan, with the support and positive reputation provided by its head office, GP Japan has become one of the three biggest and the most influential environmental NGOs in the state alongside FoE Japan and World Wildlife Fund Japan (WWF Japan).

GP Japan possesses a solid organisational structure, based on the following five factors: clear activity objects; support from its head office; a large number of members; a stable financial basis and utilising a good public image.

Firstly, GP Japan follows the three guidelines for its activities set by Greenpeace International: 1) non-violence, 2) political independence, and 3) financial independence in that it relies solely on financial support from individual supporters.³⁵ Having these clear guidelines helps GP Japan to keep its focus, which so many Japanese NGOs fail to do which results in the loss of organisational integration.

Generally speaking, Greenpeace has an international head-office centralised structure

³⁴ Paul Wapner, Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics, (Albany: University of New York Press, 1996): 51.

³⁵ Greenpeace Japan, "Finance," Organisational Structure of Greenpeace Japan, n.d., <www.greenpeace.or.jp/info/simmary_html> (16 March 2006).

and this works both in positive and negative ways. As a positive aspect of the second factor, having the head office with its excellent reputation and popularity creates automatic credibility and popularity for GP Japan domestically. GP International also supports the Japan branch financially by covering its budget shortage.³⁶ The advantage of having a strong head office, however, could work in reverse. As GP Japan has a strong connection to the head office, its activities and management are also dictated by it.³⁷ In other words, GP Japan is subordinate to orders from the GP International. This structure can be a “republic” type of linkage, according to the definition of Wapner (1996).³⁸

The third factor in GP Japan’s strong organisational structure is its financial independence from official subsidy through financial support from the head office and by having a large number of members. As seen in the previous two case studies, financial issues represent the biggest obstacle for NGOs’ operations so fundraising tactics are crucial. In regard to this, GP Japan has a large number of members, whose individual membership fees constitute 80.7 percent of all its income.³⁹ GP Japan has 15

³⁶ Greenpeace Japan had a 40,000,000 Japanese yen shortage for the financial year ending 2000, but the head office covered it (Source: Greenpeace Japan, “Current Finance,” 17 October 2001, <http://www.greenpeace.or.jp/info/index_en_html> [3 March 2005]).

³⁷ Yasuko Matsumoto, “Kokusai Kankyo NGO to Kokusai Kankyo Kyotei (International environmental NGOs and international environment framework)”, Kouza: Kankyo Syakaigaku (Seminar: Environmental Sociology), ed., Kouichi Hasegawa (Tokyo: Yuuikaku, 2001), 188.

³⁸ Paul Wapner, Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 122. He stated, “individual offices are subordinate to an official council, president, or board of directors that oversees international policy and coordinates transnational activity. While affiliates can make suggestions and push for particular policies, all major decisions must be authorized by the executive of the organization.”

³⁹ The number was 4500 in 2003. (Source from the following website. Greenpeace Japan, “Organisational structure”, 17 October 2001, <http://www.greenpeace.or.jp/info/index_en_html> [3 March 2004].)

staff members⁴⁰, which is relatively large for a Japanese NGO and shows the strength of GP Japan.⁴¹

Since GP Japan's operation is mainly advocacy work, it requires a relatively small budget compared to actual development activities as carried out by, for instance, Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC) (See **Chapter 5**). As a result, GP Japan enjoys independence from governmental funding, where other NGOs are often susceptible to the government's dominance of their activities in return for receiving subsidies.

Fourthly, in order to gain more public support and donations from individuals, creating a good image for the organisation is crucial. This is why NGOs frequently use celebrities like members of the royal family for the enhancement of their image.

Large NGOs' fund-raising operations have also become highly professional and sophisticated. Some make use of major celebrities including Hollywood stars, sports figures and even former White House aides who have become celebrities [George Stephanopoulos is on Save the Children's board of directors].⁴²

This is similar to the anti-personnel (AP) landmine issue in which Princess Diana had a personal interest. She helped to raise its profile in the international media, which put great pressure on governments to be pro-ban on AP landmines (see **Chapter 6: 175**). She gave her autograph to the picture book by AAR which helped the sale of the book.

Greenpeace uses several images such as pictures of wild animals and other images

⁴⁰ Greenpeace Japan, 3 March 2004.

⁴¹ Japanese NGOs usually have 2-3 regular staff and it is not unusual for some to have no staff at all but rather rely on volunteers.

⁴² Thomas M. Dichter, Despite Good Intentions: Why Development Assistance to the Third World has failed, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003), 103.

of nature to symbolise its activities. As a national branch, GP Japan uses them as well and this helps to show its connection to the well known head office to the public.

There is, however, a negative aspect to this factor, especially when using particular people as symbol characters. Although having celebrities for PR can create a good image and enhance fundraising, it can also work otherwise. A loss of credibility for those people with the public due to crime or scandals could directly affect the image of the associated NGOs.

Having too good a person as an associated identity could restrict the NGO's activities. For example, WWF Japan, one employee comments, "although WWF has not much worry about finance because of the good image brought by a good symbol, it is questionable whether its operations are following its true agenda or restricting its operations in order not to damage the image of a royal family member."⁴³

Friends of the Earth Japan

Friends of the Earth (FoE) Japan began its activities in 1980, about a decade earlier than Greenpeace Japan, as a national branch of FoE International, which had already built a good international reputation.⁴⁴ In its mission statement, FoE Japan states, "FoE Japan tackles problems such as global warming, deforestation, and development aid to the Third World. Our ultimate goal is the creation of a world in which all people may live peacefully and equitably."⁴⁵ The goal of its activities is also to strive "towards the realisation of sustainable society".⁴⁶

⁴³ Anonymous resource, 23 January 2004.

⁴⁴ Friends of the Earth (FoE) was established in 1966 by David Brower who had been active in the Sierra Club, the biggest environmental interest group in the United States.

⁴⁵ FoE Japan, "Mission Statement", About us, n.d., <<http://www.foejapan.org/en/>> (3 March 2004).

⁴⁶ FoE Japan, "Activities," About us, <<http://www.foe.japan.org/en/about/activity.html>> (3 March

Although it is a national branch of FoE International, each FoE branch has its own structure and activity strategy. Wapner (1996) describes it as a “confederation” in comparison to other NGOs that are usually organised as “republics”. He states, “instead of a republic, it appears more like a confederation. Individual offices are, for all intents and purposes, on their own to decide policy, spend money, take partisan stands, and so forth. It is genuinely grassroots in this sense.”⁴⁷ This characteristic is reflected in FoE Japan’s financial situation, for it receives no financial support from the head office.

FoE Japan has 18 full time staff (at the time of writing in 2005) which is a large number for advocacy - centred NGOs. For example, JCBL, the other advocacy NGO, has two full time staff. FoE Japan’s Tokyo office was hesitant to reveal the following information, but it was confirmed that the office has 500 supporting members (2005) and their membership fees constitute much of its financial basis. Donations contribute 1.8 percent of the income but so far they have received no governmental subsidies.⁴⁸

FoE Japan operates its activities according to its own objectives set by the branch itself, although it shares mission statements with the head office. This is because each country has its own political and cultural scheme for NGO activities and different environmental problems.

7.2.2 Interactions: How do they operate effectively?

Greenpeace and Greenpeace Japan

Greenpeace’ operations have always been eye-catching and media attracting. Their

2004).

⁴⁷ Paul Wapner, Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 122.

⁴⁸ FoE Japan staff, FoE Japan, “Finance issue”, 30 September 2005. Personal e-mail (30 September 2005).

dramatic actions are observed as conveying a “simple message and making environmental problems more visible to the public by seemingly rash activities.”⁴⁹ Those activities are carried out according to principles that do not harm people or property⁵⁰, therefore governments find it very hard to stop the activities since they have no reason to be stopped. The ultimate object of their activities is described by Wapner (1996) as, “disseminating an ecological sensibility”.⁵¹ He also summarised operations of Greenpeace as, “while bearing witness often works to stop specific instances of environmental destruction, in general, it aims simply to present ecological injustice to the world”.⁵²

Greenpeace does not only carry out these eye-catching activities, but also advocacy activities such as lobbying at international conferences. For each state government, it also uses ‘unofficial interactions’ which constitute an important part of its activities:

Greenpeace obviously does more than perform direct actions. It also lobbies government officials, gathers information, organises protests and boycotts, produces record albums and other educational merchandise, and carries out scientific research. While many of these endeavours, especially lobbying, are directed specifically at states, a large percentage of Greenpeace’s work is not meant to change states’ policies *per se* but is aimed at changing the attitudes and behaviour of the more general public.⁵³

⁴⁹ Wapner, Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics, 51.

⁵⁰ Yasuko Matsumoto, “Kokusai Kankyo NGO to Kokusai Kankyo Kyotei (International environmental NGOs and international environment framework),” 187.

⁵¹ Wapner, Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics, 50.

⁵² Wapner, 51.

⁵³ Wapner, 54.

Wapner also analyses two aspects of Greenpeace's lobbying activities. They are identified as; 1) utilising media to inform people and 2) showing the hypocrisy of national governments and creating 'the politics of accountability' for the people.⁵⁴ He goes on about the aim of Greenpeace to change the way people see the world by bringing "the hidden spots of the earth into people's lives and exposing hypocrisy".⁵⁵

Greenpeace (GP) Japan, in contrast to the more direct activities favoured by GP International, has concentrated on advocacy activities. Although it may seem passive, GP Japan put pressure on the Japanese government effectively in the 1990s when Japan was paying much attention to environmental issues. Through comparing the similarities and differences of GP International and GP Japan in their advocacy activities, this section will analyse the interactions of Greenpeace, especially GP Japan with governments.

Three strategies that GP Japan attempts to employ in order to exert direct influence on the decision-making process are identified as follows:

- 1) "Focus down": analyse future representatives of each state and study their attitudes toward an issue.
- 2) "Making personal contacts": exchanging business cards at reception parties and conferences.
- 3) "Make them interested": lobbying state representatives at the conferences themselves.
- 4) "Using Media": leaking sensitive information to the mass media to put pressure on

⁵⁴ Wapner, 55 - 56.

⁵⁵ Wapner, 57.

governmental officials.

The first strategy of “focus down” requires information gathering. Therefore, ‘information’ is regarded as one of the most powerful lobbying tools for NGOs. Local human networks, resources from high-level research, monitoring activities by Greenpeace-owned ships, and establishing communication systems via emails are examples of GP’s information tools.⁵⁶ GP usually studies who will represent the states at important international conference such as the Earth Summit or Conference of the Parties (COPs) in advance. Greenpeace gathers information about them from the national offices in each state and carefully studies who are the actual decision-makers. Then, after accumulating the information, it “focuses down” on each future-representative based on their advanced analysis, in order to make breakthroughs. Also, research to ascertain who are the ‘friendly states’ toward an issue is undertaken carefully, and results are sent as feedback to national offices. Following the information and its analysis, each campaigner makes contacts with the future delegations.

The second strategy, “making personal contacts” is practised both at individual and official levels. Japan is known to allow less access for NGOs to central authority compared to the Western states, so direct lobbying on decision-makers is considered as one of the most influential means to building close relations with government officials.

Meeting actual decision-makers is never an easy job, even for representatives of Greenpeace, one of the most powerful international environmental NGOs. Needless to say it is difficult for GP Japan as well. These powerful people are simply too busy for personal meetings and there are other people queuing up in front of them. In order to

⁵⁶ Matumoto, “Kokusai Kankyo NGO to Kokusai Kankyo Kyotei (International environmental NGOs and international environment framework),” 190.

make personal contacts with these decision-makers, GP Japan often took advantage of reception parties at international conferences which official representatives attend. “If I can give him/her my business card and get his/hers, that is the start. From that time, I can contact them personally via the contact address on their cards. Improvement in information technology such as email enables us to reach decision-makers much easier.”⁵⁷

Lobbying decision-makers does not generate enough pressure on its own. As the third strategy, it is necessary to make them interested in the topic and make them act by themselves.

Direct lobbying during the Earth Summit (1992) and the COP 3 in Kyoto (1997) were undertaken by many NGO personnel, who tried to talk to or share information with governmental officials in corridors to make them interested in NGOs’ opinions and ideas. Greenpeace Japan sent 30 staff to the Earth Summit for lobbying (15 Japanese staff included).⁵⁸ They made as many official appointments with state representatives as possible. If they could not make an official appointment, they tried to talk to other officials to exchange information in the corridor.⁵⁹ The campaigner states, “information exchange is one of the most effective ways to make decision-makers interested. We sometimes have secret information that they do not have.”⁶⁰

Who to directly lobby is another issue in this strategy. In the case of Japan, a former campaigner recalls that among the three important ministries in the environmental area,

⁵⁷ Matsumoto, 190.

⁵⁸ Yasuko Matsumoto, “Giteisyo Kousyo wo uogashita Kokusai NGO (International NGOs alter Protocol talks),” *Journal of Environmental Sociology* 4 (1998): 83.

⁵⁹ NGO ni yoru robii katsudo (Lobbying activities by NGOs),” *Asahi Simbun*, 2 December, 1997, 30.

⁶⁰ Yasuko Matsumoto, interviewed by the author, 20 January, 2004.

the Environmental Agency, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), and the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), the last entity was the hardest with which to make contact.⁶¹ There was no barrier with the Environment Agency or the MOFA. However, when she went to negotiate with the MITI, a *Kacho-hosa* (an assistant chief of section) was the highest ranked person in decision-making that ever came out to talk.

The fourth strategy is to use the media and Greenpeace highly values cooperating with it . It has public relations staff and they train national campaigners in making effective press releases. GP Japan's campaigners are trained on this course. Utilisation of mass media by NGOs has already been shown in the previous two case studies of JVC and JCBL. However, Greenpeace has prominent experts in media relations. As Matsumoto comments on cooperating with the media: "it is very important to keep the head offices of main newspapers well informed and interested in the issues. If the mainstay becomes interested, articles on the issue would be in the newspaper, even though the correspondent did not show enthusiasm in the first place."⁶² There are other advantages in cooperating with media. Occasionally, GP Japan purposely leaks information to the mass media and uses it to gain confirmation with government officials when they come out of conferences.⁶³

As well as cooperating directly with the media, being seen at media-attracting places such as large international conferences is also crucial. Yasuko Matsumoto, a former campaigner from GP Japan admitted that it was very important for NGOs to make themselves visible in the media through direct action at major international environmental conferences, such as the Earth Summit in 1992. They followed one of the

⁶¹ Yasuko Matsumoto, interviewed by the author, 20 January 2004.

⁶² Yasuko Matsumoto, interviewed by the author, 20 January, 2004.

⁶³ Anonymous source, 23 January 2004.

principles behind Greenpeace's activities, "out of sight, out of mind". The former campaigner stated, however, that it was more important for her to take advantage of opportunities to exert direct influence on major players that had power in actual environmental policy negotiation.⁶⁴ In Japan, it is said that direct action taken by ordinary citizens is often given little attention by decision-makers. Examples include obstructing the US army base in Okinawa in 1995, and disagreeing with Japan's cooperation in the Iraq War in 2003, both of which did not make much difference to the government's policies.

Interactions of FoE Japan: Setting up a new environmental guideline to a global extent

In April 2002, Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), which is in charge of Japan's Yen Loan projects, announced new guidelines concerning environmental considerations for overseas projects; in the form of the "Japan Bank for International Cooperation Guideline for Confirmation of Environment and Social Considerations". The new guidelines implemented on 1 October in 2003, are based on the following themes:

... conformity with the prevailing views of the international community including those of the World Bank, Asia Development Bank (ADB) and Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development" and "assuring a highly transparent and open process."⁶⁵

⁶⁴ Yasuko Matsumoto, interviewed by author, 20 January 2004.

⁶⁵ Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), "Background of the Unification of Two Guidelines", n.d., <www.jbic.go.jp/english/envion/guide/finance/eguide/index.php> (22 March

The new guideline by JBIC was a unified entity under the guidelines of two former bilateral aid related governmental agencies, the Japan Export and Import Bank (Exim Bank) and the Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF). It has been said of the guidelines of these two agencies that: “the JEXIM [Exim Bank] had no environmental guidelines until they prepared them in September 1999, with many shortages and loopholes, and lower standards than those of the OECF.”⁶⁶ The new guidelines of the JBIC have pushed the standard up to international level according to its self-claim, covering the shortages and loopholes.⁶⁷

It is less well known that there were several environmental NGOs working behind the scene encouraging the government to establish the new guidelines. FoE Japan, in particular, played a crucial role in pressuring the Japanese government to adopt the new guideline with NGOs’ participation. Therefore, the adoption of the new guidelines of a higher standard was a victory for FoE Japan.

The primary goal in this section is not to assess the guidelines but to analyse how FoE Japan was taken into consideration when establishing the guidelines. FoE Japan, used the following three interactions to bring about the guideline; 1) lobbying the Diet and MPs, 2) using ‘sub-official meetings’ with bureaucrats and 3) lobbying staff of the JBIC.

FoE Japan’s publication describes the success in setting up the new guideline as, “establishing the new guideline was a rare case where an NGO has taken advantage of

2004).

⁶⁶ “A Giant Is Born” An article for Watershed, March 2000
<<http://www.foejapan.org/en/aid/giant.html>> (23 March 2004).

⁶⁷ JBIC “Conformity with OECD’s Common Approaches”, <<http://www.jbic.go.jp>> (24 March 2004).

an opportunity in changing international and domestic politics. In addition, it was also a rare example where NGOs could participate in the whole decision-making process.”⁶⁸ As said in the comment, it is necessary to understand international and domestic political circumstances that created favourable conditions for the new guidelines, as well as FoE’s actual operations. Thus, analysis of the political situation is undertaken first.

The Environment that favoured introducing New Guidelines for JBIC

The 1990s experienced the establishment of several environmental guidelines in the international community. Ironically, it was not inspired purely by concerns for the global environment but by the competitiveness of the United States.

FoE Japan has reported a background story to the competition between states, which moved the United States to establish higher environmental guidelines. In 1996, construction companies of the United States withdrew from competition to win a contract to construct the Sanxia dam against other countries such as Japan, Germany and Sweden. The reason for withdrawing was a concern for the possibility of a serious impact on the environment around the site. Therefore, while other countries with lower domestic standards of environmental assessment remained in competition, the firms in the United States under higher standards lost business opportunities. Learning from the experience, in order to gain equal business opportunities with other countries, the United States started trying to establish a universal standard for environmental conservation. As a result of the United States’ appeal, preparation for this universal standard by the end of 2001 was declared at the G-8 Köln Summit in 1999. Observing

⁶⁸ FoE Japan ed., Tojyokoku Sien to Kankyo Guideline (Assisting developing countries and a guideline for environment), (Tokyo: Ryokuhu Syuppan, 2002), 134.

this international trend as a crucial opportunity, environmental NGOs over the world started lobbying the OECD for transparency and accountability in negotiations.⁶⁹

Around the same time, the domestic situation in Japan also provided a good opportunity for NGOs to penetrate into the environmental field. In March 1995, the cabinet meeting decided to merge the two existing Yen Loan related agencies, the Exim Bank and the OECF, into a single agency, named the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). Because the cabinet decision presented no concrete philosophy or strategy of this new agency, FoE Japan saw the potential to introduce high-standard environmental guidelines for the JBIC. Taking advantage of this blank space in the political situation, FoE Japan used ‘unofficial’ interactions to exert influence on the decision-making process.

General Interactions Used by FoE Japan

FoE Japan’s activities can be categorised in the following four strategies; 1) study and research, 2) making proposals to the government and the business world on the issue, 3) cooperation with FoE International and other local groups, and 4) information disseminating to raise the public awareness in an easily understood way. Among the four categories, the first and the fourth strategies represent the strong advocacy nature of FoE Japan as well as Greenpeace Japan.

The second strategy, lobbying the government and the business world is one of the prominent activities by FoE Japan. The business sector in Japan conforms to a part of the established decision-making system by exerting its financial power for politicians

⁶⁹ Ikuko Matsumoto, interviewed by the author, 23 January 2004. It is reinforced by the publication by FoE Japan, ed., Tojyookoku Shienn to Kankyoo Gaidorain (Assistance for developing countries and environmental guideline) (Tokyo: FoE Japan, 2002), 135.

and providing re-employment opportunities for retired bureaucrats. The two NGOs in the previous cases studies, JVC and JCBL, both tried to make a breakthrough in the system by connecting to politicians in particular (See **Chapter 5:** 140-143 and **6:** 180-183 and **6:** 190-191 for more detail). Greenpeace Japan also tries to build close relationships with government officials and politicians. FoE Japan certainly attempts to make contacts with politicians. Additionally, FoE Japan also interacts with the business world, in which interest in the environmental issues is growing.

Connecting to the business world is not unusual for environment-related NGOs, in comparison to ones in other fields, because the business industry now seeks their chances in new production in ecological and economical ways. Examples are: production of an eco-car in the car industry for reducing greenhouse gas emission and the health insurance industry has an interest in decreasing ozone layer destruction to reduce payment for skin cancer victims. The profit-making firms have good reasons to be interested in the issue and that creates space for environmental NGOs to cooperate with them.

Similarly to aforementioned NGOs, politicians are FoE Japan's target for advocacy activity as well. In the case of establishing a new environmental conservation guideline for JBIC, FoE Japan was able to seek positive cooperation from them because it was to 'create' something that had not existed.

By lobbying the business sector, FoE Japan was putting pressure on politicians and bureaucrats, the two other major political actors in Japan, at the same time because they mutually depend on each other as well as being mutually beneficial. Politicians rely heavily on political donations from the business sector. That is why there is a number of 'cosy relationships between politics and business'. This phenomenon can also be applied to the bureaucracy. As already mentioned, bureaucrats seek out related business

sectors for their post early retirement re-employment. Therefore, although the business sectors seek favours from both actors for their smooth business operations, it is as important as the other two actors are to it.

The third strategy, being a part of an international environmental NGO, provides FoE Japan with a high reputation, credibility and powerful philosophical support. This is similar to the character of GP Japan. What is different from GP Japan is that FoE Japan receives no financial support from the head office and it only enjoys benefits from its already established 'authority'. Its head office was named one of the top ten most influential NGOs in the environmental area in 1973 and still keeps this reputation.⁷⁰ FoE Japan also collaborates with other local branches in other states as well as Japan's local groups of similar interest.

This international/domestic networking is important for NGOs. Keck and Sikkink (1998) study the case of Rondonia and mentioned, "unable effectively to influence the activities of the state government and of federal agencies acting in Rondonia at the state level, local groups applied pressure at either national or international levels."⁷¹ This is applicable to Japanese NGOs. Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC) acknowledged the importance and considered the possibility of networking with more powerful international NGOs, however, it still hesitated for fear of being 'a local office' of them.⁷² On the other hand, the Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL) started as the national campaign of the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) in the first place, and enjoyed cooperation from its authorised head office, but is now at a

⁷⁰ Akira Iriye, Global Community: The Role of International Organizations in the Making of the Contemporary World, 146.

⁷¹ Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics, (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998), 146.

⁷² Kiyotaka Takahashi, interviewed by the author, 13 May 2003.

turning point because ICBL has become smaller at the time of 2003 for self-consideration of reaching to a level for small-governance.⁷³

Connecting to Authorities: The case of establishing JBIC Guidelines

In the case of establishing the new guidelines for the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), FoE Japan interacted with the authorities actively and gained cooperation from them. Despite a general understanding of hostilities between NGOs and governments in Japan, Friends of the Earth maintains a positive relationship with these authorities.

The key to FoE's work is the understanding that states play the central role in protecting the earth's ecosystem. States represent the most advanced institutions able to influence human activities throughout the world. Thus, their commitment is crucial to earnest environmental protection...To win the support of states, FOE many times acts like an interest group intent upon lobbying states officials.⁷⁴

Connecting to authorities is the key point in FoE's advocacy activities. Having 'authorities' on-side allows FoE Japan to participate in the decision-making process from inside. Takamine (1999) describes the importance of being an insider in the decision-making process through using the case of Asian environmental NGOs⁷⁵. Having understood the influence that politicians can exert, as mentioned earlier, both

⁷³ Yasuhiro Kitagawa, interviewed by the author, 9 June 2003.

⁷⁴ Wapner, Environmental Activism and World Civic Politics, 125-126.

⁷⁵ Tsukasa Takamine, "Environmental Non Governmental Organisations in Asia: Emerging Political Powers?", Asiaview 9, vol.1 (1999),
<<http://www.warc.murdoch.edu.au/asiaview/may99/tsukasa.htm>> (15 July 2004).

JVC and JCBL have tried to connect with MPs as well. Yet, they were not as efficient or tactful as FoE Japan.

Active participation of politicians or Members of Parliaments (MPs) in establishing the guidelines appeared clearly in a process of preparation for the guidelines for the JBIC.

Since before the merger, NGOs have focused on demanding unified and rigorous environmental guidelines to cover operations of both former agencies, JEXIM and OECF. Pressured by several members of the national Diet, the JBIC promised last year to prepare basically unified environmental guidelines that “comply with international standards”. It was also promised that JBIC would ensure transparency and have public consultations with NGOs in preparing the guidelines.⁷⁶

FoE Japan started lobbying MPs at the ordinary session of the Diet in January 1999, the session where they discussed the foundation bill of the JBIC for the first time. “Connection with MPs can be an effective tool to influence the government in Japan, where NGOs are so limited to access to the decision-making process.”⁷⁷ This was actually advice from American NGOs, which are experienced in lobbying politicians. The international network worked in this respect efficiently.

There were three means of lobbying MPs by FoE Japan and eventually the national Diet.

⁷⁶ Source from FoE Japan homepage, “NGO Advocacy points,” FoEJ PF&E Program: JBIC: A Giant of Development Finance is Born, n.d., <www.foejapan.org/en/aid/giant.html> (22 March 2004).

⁷⁷ FoE Japan, Tojyokoku Shienn to Kankyoo Guideline (Assistance for developing countries and environmental guideline), 137.

- 1) Making contact with both the ruling party and opposition parties,
- 2) Hosting study meetings for MPs with visiting overseas guest speakers,
- 3) Taking advantage of the structure of the decision-making process ⁷⁸

FoE tells an interesting story with regard to the third point on how it should lobby politicians. Some MPs suggested that FoE Japan should lobby politicians before consultation within the ruling party for submission of the bill. This is because once a bill was ready for official submission to the Diet, it was very hard to make any change to the substance as most interests were already taken into account by then. Without knowing the structure and process of how decisions were made, FoE Japan would have waited to make its move till the last minute, which would have been meaningless. This also shows that gaining insider status in the decision-making process helps to get to know more about its way of functioning and how to perform effectively.

Upon cooperating with insiders of the decision-making process, FoE Japan made contact with at least three MPs in order to pass on its opinions and messages to the government through them. An outstanding achievement, drawn from cooperation with MPs, was that their direct actions made high-powered decision-makers pledge to establish an integrated environmental guideline for the JBIC at the budget committee of *Sangiin* (House of Councillors).⁷⁹ Even FoE Japan was surprised by the pledge for it which exceeded their expectations.

We wanted MPs to question at the budget committee, because it is the occasion that

⁷⁸ FoE Japan, 138.

⁷⁹ FoE Japan, 138 - 139.

Ministers themselves attend. We knew that the-then Minister for Finance, Miyazawa, was the kind of person who preferred to make his own comment, not on paper prepared by bureaucrats. Presumably, the pledge the Minister made at the committee was more than what bureaucrats expected but because it was the pledge, they had no choice but to implement it.⁸⁰

Furthermore, FoE Japan submitted a petition carrying 12 MPs' signatures to the PM Obuchi, demanding the establishment of new guidelines that measured up to international standards of transparency in the decision-making process. As well as JCBL, FoE Japan presented the paper at the official residence of the prime minister in order to emphasise its importance.⁸¹

As for effective lobbying, FoE Japan has carefully selected the MPs with which it cooperates. This was also the strategy of GP Japan on selecting to lobby friendly states at international conferences (see page 205 of this chapter). Among the MPs who cooperated with FoE Japan, Kosugi Takashi, the MP of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), had personal interest in environmental conservation when he was still an MP of the local assembly.⁸² As with Greenpeace Japan, this NGO studies who was sympathetic to its activities and who were actual decision-makers.

As well as cooperating with MPs, FoE Japan also took advantages of regular Sub-official meeting opportunities with the Ministry of Finance (MOF), the most powerful decision-making ministry in Japan. The regular meetings between NGOs and

⁸⁰ Ikuko Matsumoto, interviewed by the author, 23 January 2004.

⁸¹ FoE Japan, Tojyookoku Shienn to Kankyoo Guideline (Assistance for developing countries and environmental guideline), 139.

⁸² See Takashi Kosughi's personal homepage, "Profile," MP Kosughi's activities, n.d., <www.osk.3web.ne.jp/~takosugi/profile-index.html> (17 March 2006).

the MOF started in 1997 and FoE Japan and the Ministry have discussed common environmental guidelines since 1998 at these opportunities and the topic of a new guideline for JBIC was one of them.⁸³ This type of interaction is often used by Japanese NGOs and JVC especially made use of for its activities (See **Chapter 5:** 135-137).

Of greatest concern for the new guideline was the passivity of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI). It was because the MITI feared the domestic industries' loss and weakening in international competition if Japan set its own environmental standard at too high a level in comparison to other countries. It happened to the United States in the mid-1990s, although it ended in creating a global movement for setting common environmental guidelines in the international arena. In order to change the MITI's firm attitude, FoE Japan cooperated with MPs to lobby the ministry.⁸⁴

Immediately before September 1999, the JBIC announced its own guidelines for environmental concerns. Although the guidelines were only tentative, FoE Japan was shocked to learn that the JBIC had made the guidelines without any consultation or information sharing with NGOs. A fear of 'transparency and cooperation with NGOs' being specious had arisen, and so the NGOs had tried to set up occasions for concerned people including the JBIC, ministries, environmental experts, MPs and NGOs to meet in a casual way. It had to be 'casual' because if the meeting was 'official' or 'formal', it may have been refused for fear of having too strong an impact from the NGOs' side. NGOs' intention with regard to these sub-official meetings does not lie in being

⁸³ FoE Japan, Tojyookoku Shienn to Kankyoo Guideline (Assistance for developing countries and environmental guideline), 139.

⁸⁴ FoE Japan, 140.

regarded as an official participant in the decision-making process, but in making decision-makers aware of NGOs' opinions and messages. However, the legitimacy of these occasions is weak, and so, the JBIC hosted an international symposium on environmental guidelines and NGOs were invited to make official comments.⁸⁵

JBIC was positive in including NGOs in setting up the new guidelines. In its official publication, collaboration with NGOs was stated clearly in several parts. Their examples are:

- 1) Collecting information by capitalising on the expertise of NGOs and their community-based operations,
- 2) Cooperation to maximise the development effect of projects financed by JBIC,
- 3) Exchange of views with NGOs on JBIC activities.⁸⁶

JBIC also started regular meetings with NGOs in April 2001. They were to “promote information sharing and discuss specific possibilities for collaboration”⁸⁷ Further more, “it was intended to increase the transparency of JBIC operations, increase mutual understanding between NGOs and JBIC, and raise the quality of ODA loan operations through collaboration with NGOs involved in community-based operations.”⁸⁸ Five meetings were held in 2001 and discussed the establishment of environmental

⁸⁵ FoE Japan, 140.

⁸⁶ JBIC, “Collaboration with NGOs”, Activities to Promote Environmental Considerations, n.d., <<http://jbic.go.jp>> (24 March 2004).

⁸⁷ JBIC, “Kyoogikai Kaisai Yookoo (Information on regular meetings),” Regular NGO-JBIC Meetings, n.d., <<http://www.jbic.go.jp/japanese/ngo-jbic/youryou.html>> (25 October 2004).

⁸⁸ JBIC, 14 October 2004.

guidelines with 126 organisations in total participating.⁸⁹

FoE Japan Programme director recalls why FoE Japan succeeded in bringing the government to favour setting a high standard of environmental guidelines. “It was human power”, she said in an interview. The programme director of FoE Japan stated that those decision-makers were thinking how they could make the country better, so there was not much disagreement on establishing high-standard guidelines for environmental concerns. Her conclusion on how NGOs should lobby the government is, “there is always an intention and interest among these decision-makers. So what we should do is create an occasion to bring these intentions and interests for discussion to induce implementation.”⁹⁰

7.3 Facing New Challenges

The two Japanese environmental NGOs successfully pressured the Japanese government to adopt more environmentally concerned policies in the 1990s. Yet, as time has gone by, some new challenges have appeared for them. The challenges are; 1) both NGOs are losing a number of supporting members and that affects their financial stability, 2) the environmental issues have become too complicated and scientific for easy understanding, and 3) the Japanese government seems to be losing its interest in global environmental issues with a rise in “Peace Building” as a way of showing its ‘face’ to the outer world.

Among NGOs in Japan, GP Japan and FoE Japan have the greatest number of members. However, as well as other influential NGOs such as JVC, they are facing a decrease in membership. It is very common that when the issue is hot, people become

⁸⁹ JBIC, 14 October 2004.

⁹⁰ Ikuko Matsumoto, interviewed by the author, 23 January 2004.

interested, but when the topic has cooled down, people lose interest in supporting them any longer. Therefore, it is necessary to keep the issue 'hot'. Many development NGOs now put more work into emergency relief operations, which gain more immediate public interest. JCBL, for instance, has shifted its main issue from only anti-personnel landmines, which is considered to be 'finished' by the Japanese government, to cluster bombs and depleted uranium issue.⁹¹ For environmental NGOs, it is hard to keep the topic 'hot' to gain immediate interest since the environmental crises usually occur over a long span.

As the second concern, the environmental issues became too complicated and scientific. From the beginning, the environmental problems were a mix of science and politics, but a series of international talks in the 1990s somehow made them familiar to the ordinary public. That was because in the 1990s issues such as global warming and ozone layer depletion were obvious and easy to understand. Media has also made the international environmental talks to seem as if they were exciting games between powerful states. Yet, they have now gone beyond these general issues. Matsumoto says, "it is getting difficult because the environmental issues themselves are becoming too intricate nowadays and people simply lose interest because of the difficulties."⁹² To maintain continued public support, FoE Japan is shifting its activity principle down to a grassroots level and tries to describe environmental issues in a way that is simple and easy to understand.

Thirdly and the most concerning challenge is that the Japanese government talks seem to have lost interest in the area. The number of pages in *Japan's ODA* in 1991

⁹¹ JCBL, "2003 nenn kara 2004 nenn no Katsudo (Activity report in 2003/2004)" JCBL no Katsudo (JCBL activity), 7 July 2004, <<http://www.jca.apc.org/banmines/>> (15 October 2004).

⁹² Ikuko Matsumoto, interviewed by the author, 23 January 2004.

devoted to environmental issues was 15. In 2001, it was only one page. Instead, the new scheme of “conflict prevention and peace building” constituted a major part of *Japan’s ODA 2001* and this trend is continuing. Especially after Japan dispatched the Self Defence Force (SDF) to Iraq for recovery operations or so-called “Peace Building”, human contributions by SDF seem to have become a new tool for highlighting Japan’s international contribution.

7.4 Conclusion: Efficient Strategy at the Turning Point

It is undeniable that Greenpeace Japan and Friends of the Earth Japan, by taking advantage of international and domestic circumstances, have brought about impressive changes in Japan’s environmental policy in the 1990s. Because the environmental policy was one of Japan’s crucial foreign policies, it can be said the two NGOs have influenced Japan’s foreign policy.

Compared to the previous two case studies, Japanese environmental NGOs seem to have operated more tactfully and effectively in advocacy and have achieved a higher standard in Japan’s environmental policy through various interactions.

The two NGOs have made full use of their international networks. By working closely with their international head offices, they were given not only credibility and a high reputation, which helped to gain popularity in Japan, but also the rich resources of the head office. The resources include advocacy strategy that helped the operation of the Japanese branch. In addition to the direct usage, indirect usage of the international network was used by GP Japan and FoE Japan as *Gai-atsu* (outside pressure). By possessing a back up from the international head office, the two NGOs could use the outside pressure on the Japanese government, which was well known for its concern about the states’ international reputation.

Although, there is no doubt that the Japanese environmental NGOs have become influential players in the decision-making system on Japan's environmental issues in the 1990s, they are now facing several challenges, which may require future alterations in terms of their operations. Greenpeace Japan and FoE Japan have come to a turning point in their relations with the government. They advanced their own policy advocacy in the 1990s using effective interactions. However, the shift in Japan's foreign policy from providing financial assistance to direct human contribution following the international trend has pushed them to be in need of creating new strategies. The question here is, are there any new strategies? The answer for the question may be given by future research beyond this thesis.

Chapter 8

Strategies of Japanese NGOs: Exerting Influence through a Variety of Means

8.1 Introduction: Despite the government's original intention...

The earlier part of this thesis has discussed how Japanese NGOs have used the NGO cooperation system, which was introduced by the government in 1989, to exert influence over the government's foreign aid policy through various types of interaction. Despite the government's original intention to make Japanese NGOs supplementary actors in the policy of "Visible Japanese Aid (VJA)" (see **Chapter 1** for more detailed analysis), they have grown stronger and far more influential than was expected.

This chapter analyses the general modes of operation of the Japanese NGO community based on the previous three case studies, and aims to reveal their peculiarities in the Japanese political climate. It will be shown whether the Japanese NGO community is closer in nature to Western or Asian NGOs or whether a unique third type of NGO community is in evidence. The analysis will focus on the scope of the Government-NGO relationship. This is important because most NGO related literature has failed to discuss this aspect of Japanese NGOs. As such, this analysis will fill a gap in the already established field of NGO study.

The previous three case studies have studied four Japanese NGOs in terms of their interactions with the Japanese government: **Chapter 5** focused on the Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC), **Chapter 6** on the Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL), and **Chapter 7** on Friends of the Earth (FoE) Japan and Greenpeace (GP) Japan as examples of environmental NGOs operating in Japan. These

chapters have revealed features and characteristics of these NGOs in terms of the efficiency of their operations. Examples of this have been JVC's active advocacy for Official Development Assistance (ODA) reform; JCBL's success in changing the Japanese government's policy towards the global ban on anti-personnel (AP) landmines; and the establishment of the high standards of environmental assessment in Japan's Yen Loan projects as carried out by environmental organisations such as FoE Japan.

The results of these analyses have indicated that the course of Japan's foreign aid policy has been influenced and changed by the actions of NGOs in the last decade. These changes include reforming the ODA charter, starting a new policy and aid scheme for AP landmines and restricting Yen Loan projects overseas in terms of environmental concerns. These phenomena have raised the following questions; were these changes favoured by the Japanese government? Has the government taken advantage of Japanese NGOs as it originally intended? Or have NGOs utilised the government's cooperative attitude to further their own aid agenda?

These questions were raised in the introduction of this thesis. Therefore, this chapter is to be a crucial part of the thesis paving the way for the conclusion, which will be given in the following chapter.

Based on this chapter, consideration will be given in the conclusion to the recent trend of the Japanese aid strategy, which has linked ODA and sending the Self Defence Force (SDF) overseas. This trend has not appeared suddenly, but has emerged out of the government's possible irritation at the fast-growing influence of Japanese NGOs. By introducing the Peace Building scheme, the Japanese government has taken a certain role away from NGOs and given it to the SDF. This chapter studies the causes of the Japanese government's possible irritation at NGOs. In addition, it will focus on what

prompted the government to make a change in the substance of the Peace Building scheme from reconstructing works to providing human resources, which has meant sending the JSDF to conflict affected areas.

8.2 Means of interactions available to Japanese NGOs

There are seven major types of interactions observed between Japanese NGOs and the government. Japanese NGOs may use these to exert their influence, or, conversely, the government may use them to control NGOs. They are:

- 1) ‘Sub-official Meetings’: Setting up an open discussion space to create social pressure.**
- 2) ‘Financial Support’: Controlling NGOs by financial assistance.**
- 3) ‘International/Domestic Network’: Securing transparency and accountability of NGOs to create outside pressure.**
- 4) ‘Workshops or Symposiums’: Holding them to raise public awareness and to form public consensus.**
- 5) ‘Personal Relationships’: Putting pressure directly on decision-makers.**
- 6) ‘Media Usage’: Creating public pressure.**
- 7) ‘Campaigns’: Running campaigns to make the issue prominent to the public.**

Although listed individually, these seven interactions often overlap each other. For instance, “media usage” is able to empower workshops/symposiums and campaigns. The ‘personal relationship’ type of interaction contributes to building the ‘international/domestic network’. Therefore, features drawn from the case studies can be used in the analysis of several interactions.

Taking these correlations into account, the following section will analyse each of the above seven interaction types using observations from the previous case studies. The

objective here is to see whether or not a unique feature of the Japanese NGO community will be revealed in the Japanese political climate.

8.2.1 ‘Sub-official Meeting’ interaction type

In the 1990s, the Japanese government had become eager to have meetings with NGOs to exchange opinions over issues related to its foreign aid policies. These meetings are considered as ‘official’ with participation of government officials. At the same time, however, because the meetings are ‘open’ to everyone, the value of ‘official’ is undercut to some extent. Therefore, the government side possess the choice of whether to take opinions from these meetings into account or not. NGOs are sometimes invited officially and other times as free participants. Through these meetings, NGOs have tried to exert influence on the decision-making process. Hirata (2002) notes,

The success of NGOs in influencing aid policy largely depends on their ability to engage state officials. While easy access to officials does not guarantee policy impact, accelerating mutual understanding through dialogue is one of the most important steps of NGOs to change aid policy.¹

This interaction has not only favoured the NGOs side, but also the government side as well. Having these ‘open’ meetings to hear public opinion, the government side can highlight its transparency in the official decision-making process, which has often been criticised as ‘talking behind closed doors’ that is regarded as only benefiting a exclusive participating group.

¹ Keiko Hirata, Civil Society in Japan: The Growing Role of NGOs in Tokyo’s Aid and Development Policy (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), 133.

However, this transparency does not necessarily guarantee NGO's actual participation in the process. The government was able to disregard the opinions of NGOs in its open meetings. As Matsumoto (1997) states, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) admitted that it did not guarantee the reflection of these 'outside' voices in policy formation.² Later, he was criticised by the government official for including his personal comment in his publication.³ This shows the true attitude of MOFA officials towards NGOs in part.

This is different from the experience of many Western NGOs, where NGOs are institutionalised and guaranteed official access to the decision-making process.⁴ Since NPO Law was established in March 1998, Japanese NGOs are eligible to be formalised if they wish, and if they meet criteria, in which case they are recognised as institutionalised entities with similar official access to the decision-making process as Western NGOs.⁵ However, in reality the criteria for formalisation are set at a high level which is often beyond the reach of most Japanese NGOs except for a few such as the Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC), the Association for Aid and Relief (AAR) and Oxfam. It took almost two years for JVC to be formalised. AAR was given NPO status in 2000, and Oxfam in 2003. Formalisation of an NGO, generally speaking, secures the legitimacy of their influence because its existence becomes undeniable

² Satoru Matsumoto, Mekong Gawa Kaihatsu: 21 Seiki no Kaihatsu Enjyo (Mekong River Development: Development Assistance in 21st Century), (Tokyo: Tukiji Syokan, 1997), 177.

³ Anonymous source, 22 April 2003.

⁴ For examples of participation of Western NGOs in decision-making processes, see Smillie and Helmich, ed., Stakeholders: Government-NGO Partnerships for International Development (London: Earthscan, 1999). This book covers most Northern NGOs including Japan.

⁵ NPO Law entitles registered organisations be granted several privileges including tax deduction. Refer to a Cabinet Homepage. Japanese Cabinet, "NPO Law", 3 December 2004 <<http://www.npo-homepage.go.jp/new-manual/hou.pdf>>, (4 December 2005).

within a law-abiding society. Boris (1998) notes, “as a general rule, the more formalised the relationship, the more influence the nonprofit providers are able to exert, particularly through legal claims against the state.”⁶ However, in the case of Japanese NGOs, the problem lies in the fact that the government pays little attention to the NGO community. This is because although the NGO community has been regarded as important, it is still unable to move beyond the position of ‘outsider’ and cannot break into the established aid decision-making process. Even so, Japanese NGOs have used this type of interaction to create outside pressure through ‘disclosing records’.

The three previous case studies have revealed that among four NGOs, three groups have produced results using this ‘disclosing records’ type of interaction through sub-official meetings and symposiums. Successful organisations in this regard are JVC, FoE Japan and GP Japan. JCBL has not taken part in these sub-official meetings with ministries, but instead it has held a number of private meetings with government officials and politicians (MPs) and hosted symposiums and workshops; a process which has worked in much the same fashion as if they had attended those meetings. Acknowledging that JCBL is an exception among others, the following part will discuss those meetings which have been open to the general public. These include NGO-MOFA regular meetings, NGO-MOF regular meetings, and JBIC and JICA meetings.

JVC has taken advantage of its good reputation in the development NGO community to participate actively in a series of MOFA-NGO meetings. Although these meetings are open to the public and anyone interested can participate, due to small staff numbers and the size of the organisations, opportunities to attend are usually limited to

⁶ Elizabeth T. Boris and C. Eugene Steuerle, ed., Nonprofits and Government: Collaboration and conflict, (Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 1998), 353.

those bigger NGOs.⁷ As was described in **Chapter 4**, most records of MOFA-NGO meetings are disclosed to the public on the internet with cooperation between NGOs and related ministries. In this way, if MOFA personnel fall silent on difficult and sensitive questions raised by the NGOs, such as those concerning overseas dam projects that often cause forced emigration of local people in affected areas, it would be recorded as ‘silence’. This allows readers of the record to get a sense that there could be something that MOFA staff did not want to be uncovered at the meeting. Recorded as they are, the disclosure of all records creates pressure on the government. Knowing the efficiency of disclosing records, NGOs often encourage their members to view these records online.⁸

This type of interaction works effectively, but there are still many issues concerning the efficiency of this interaction. For instance, all records are supposed to be on the internet, but when looking at NGO-MOFA regular meetings in 1997 and 1998, it was found that they had simply disappeared from the site run jointly by NGO and MOFA. JVC personnel commented that the disappearance was due to ‘not-very-nice events’ for the MOFA.⁹ Yet, it is undeniable that the NGO community has taken advantage of this means of interaction to an extent that went beyond the government’s original intention. The transparency of NGO selection for participation is also an important issue. Atsuko Isoda of JVC wrote about an unclear selection process for an ODA Reform meeting in 2004.¹⁰

⁷ A lot of Japanese NGOs have only a small number of staff. So if one of them goes to meetings, that could hinder the every day running of the organisation. Therefore, many NGOs cannot afford to send personnel to attend meetings.

⁸ For instance, JVC encourages members to read records from *ODA Sogo Senryaku Kaigi* for public awareness on this issue as well as for creating public pressure.

⁹ An anonymous NGO staff, interviewed by the author, 26 November 2004.

¹⁰ Atsuko Isoda “ODA Sogo Senryaku Kaigi de nani ga hanasarete iruka (What has been discussed at ODA Comprehensive Strategy Conference?),” Trial and Error 236, January-February (2004): 2.

8.2.2 ‘Financial Support’ interaction type

As long as their financial foundation is one of the Japanese NGOs’ weak points, donors and contributors will inevitably hold a certain power over them. With very little charity basis in Japan, the government has been a major donor for the NGO community with few exceptions.

Therefore, compared with the ‘Sub-official meeting’ type of interaction, “Financial Support” interaction is more effective for the government to take control of NGOs’ activities. The annual report of Japan’s foreign aid, *Japan’s ODA*, repeatedly emphasises that financial instability is usually one of the weakest points of NGOs in Japan (See **Chapter 4**: 97 for more detail). By holding the power in selecting which NGOs receive financial support, the government succeeds in controlling NGOs’ activities as well. Even after application for funding being approved, those recipient NGOs have to carry out their activities according to the government’s preferences because of the ‘later payment’ system of official subsidies (see **Chapter 4**: 95).

To avoid being controlled by the government, more and more NGOs have chosen alternative sources of receiving funds, such as individual donations and international institution’s subsidies. However, these alternative sources of funds are only available for NGOs of strong reputation. Most Japanese NGOs are small and resource-poor, and are likely to be passed over for official subsidies. This is creating a gap within the NGO community in Japan, between the “haves” and the “have nots”. This gap leads to competition and rivalry in the NGO community and will be discussed later in this section, following an analysis of the government’s method of taking control over NGOs.

The official selection process of NGOs for financial support creates ‘favourite

NGOs' or pro-government organisations. This is dangerous for the whole NGO community as a 'sweet relationship' with the government may deprive them of their principles of autonomy and independence. The director of JVC, Kumaoka, answered in an interview referring to this potential danger as follows. "It is very hard for anyone who obtained power and easy access to privileges to maintain NGO spirit because NGO spirit requires independence from these powers".¹¹

The JVC, which has always been outspoken in its criticism of the government's development policy, received less funding from the Grant for Grassroots Projects (GGP) scheme for advance applications in 2002.¹² There are a few possible reasons to explain this decrease, however, since there was no transparency of the decision-making, it may be assumed that JVC was not the government's 'favourite' NGO for funding.

In terms of financial support, JCBL and the other two environmental NGOs have shown different attitudes from that of JVC. Even with its slight shift to advocacy, JVC has long worked as an operational development NGO that has required a huge budget for project implementation. Conversely, JCBL has not required such large amounts of money since their main objective has been to promote the total landmine ban policy with the government. This has made JCBL purely an advocacy NGO. The focuses of FoE Japan and GP Japan have been divided almost equally into project implementation and advocacy. However, they have enjoyed better financial bases than any other Japanese NGOs because of their international reputations.¹³ Neither JCBL, FoE Japan, or GP Japan receives funding from the government. They are all funded by individual

¹¹ Michiya Kumaoka, interviewed by the author, 17 June 2003.

¹² Kunio Iwama, interviewed by the author, 30 June 2003.

¹³ FoE Japan has been entirely funded by individual donations and membership fees. GP Japan has also relied on those two sources, but it has also received a subsidy from its head office.

donations (JCBL and FoE Japan) or support from their own head offices (GP Japan). As these NGOs receive no funding from the government, they are much freer from government interference.

Although they receive no support from the ODA scheme for their operations, they are indifferent to it as they do monitor the way the government's funding is used. JCBL monitors Japan's ODA through the framework of the "Zero Victim Program" and provides a series of reports in its newsletters. FoE Japan and GP Japan have set their focus on environmental aid strategy and launched campaigns to that end.

These three NGOs have more freedom but their financial situation still restricts their activities to a certain degree. For instance, recently JCBL has shifted its focus from the AP landmine issue to the issue of cluster bombs, which appeared as a problem in recent wars. Cluster bombs are a similar issue to the landmine issue, yet the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), JCBL's head office, has decided not to broaden its activities to cluster bombs reasoning that concentrating on one issue has brought success to the global landmine ban movement.¹⁴ Even without the full support of its head office, JCBL has decided to take a further step by getting involved in the cluster bomb issue. The "JCBL Assistance Initiative for Mine Free Asia" campaign was started in 2002¹⁵ and a "JCBL Petition Campaign to Ban Cluster Bombs and other Explosive Remnants of War (ERW)" was also launched at the same time. Why did this shift in target occur? The biggest reason is that as the world lost its interest in the AP landmine issue, which was prominent in December 1997, getting wide public support

¹⁴Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL), "ICBL Position on Cluster Bombs", Cluster Bombs, 11-12 September 1999, <<http://www.jca.apc.org/banmines/framework/cluster/>> (4 June 2004).

¹⁵ This is to activate landmine banning movements in other Asian countries as many states have not signed up to the Ottawa Treaty.

for the AP landmine issue started to become difficult.

GP Japan's receiving of financial support from its head office in order to fill the deficit in its annual budget naturally binds its activities to the intentions of the mainstay. As discussed in the previous chapter, this is one of the aspects of the "republican" type structuring of Greenpeace as an organisation. Therefore, it can be said that GP Japan might be free from the government's control in terms of finance, but might be restricted by its head office.

In order not to be controlled by the government or the head offices, fundraising strategy is becoming more and more important for many NGOs. A survey on the voluntary sector in Japan undertaken by Bothwell (2003) clearly shows NGOs themselves feel the necessity for stable finance and make much effort in terms of fundraising.¹⁶ However, if NGOs pour too much energy into fundraising, they would be more like profit-making entities. As Taylor (1996) points out,

If government funding is too restrictive, there are many smaller voluntary agencies that survive without government money. And for larger charities, government funding may be a small proportion of their total income. But the influence of government extends beyond what it funds directly. Within the voluntary sector, regulations, training requirements, drives towards quality and more general forces to be more business-like are shaping the 'cabbage patch' within which voluntary organisations operate.¹⁷

¹⁶ Robert O. Bothwell, "The challenges of growing the NPO and voluntary sector in Japan", in The Voluntary and Non-Profit Sector in Japan: The challenge of change, Stephen P. Osborne ed. (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004), 142 - 145.

¹⁷ Marilyn Taylor, "What are the Key Influences on the Work of Voluntary Agencies?" in Voluntary Agencies: Challenges of Organisation and Management, ed. David Billis and Margaret

Finding the balance between establishing stable financial resources and remaining as non-profit entities with voluntary status is the critical issue that Japanese NGOs are facing now.

8.2.3 ‘International/Domestic Network’ interaction type

In **Chapter 3**, with regard to the nature of Japan’s foreign aid, it was concluded that Japan has been very sensitive and reactionary to trends in the international community, especially the United States. In other words, the government would form its foreign policy according to *Gai-atsu* (outside pressure).

The outside pressure can be both international and domestic. The domestic pressure stems from the Japanese NGOs who have been trying to exert influence using a variety of interactions, from inside the country. In forming its foreign policy, Japan has been both flexible and submissive in respect to international pressure. Based on this aspect of the Japanese government, it is obvious that creating outside pressure to support NGO activities is the most efficient strategy to exert influence, either internationally or domestically on Japan’s foreign aid policy.

The importance of building coalitions is not peculiar to Japanese NGOs. Mathews (1997) uses the example of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and highlighted the “tightly closed world of trade negotiations” to describe the importance of forming coalitions within and beyond borders.¹⁸

Recognising their importance, three NGOs have enjoyed support from outside Japan: JCBL, FoE Japan and GP Japan. JCBL, began as the national campaign of the

Harris (Houndmills: Macmillan Press, 1996), 18.

¹⁸ Jessica T. Mathews, “Power Shift”, *Foreign Affairs* 76, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 1997), 54.

International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) and was supported fully by its international head office. FoE Japan and GP Japan are both national branches of internationally recognised NGOs. Therefore, they enjoy the benefits of the established reputations or ‘authority’ that their international offices have. They will be discussed in more detail in the later part of this section. JVC, which will be discussed now, has considered the drawbacks of international networking and is eager to build domestic collaboration among Japanese NGOs.

Being a purely Japanese local NGO, JVC has established a domestic network with other NGOs.¹⁹ The term ‘Network’ here has both practical and symbolic meanings - sharing things together and working together. Sharing facilities is an example of networking. Four other NGOs have their offices in the same building where JVC has its Tokyo office. They are the Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL) (the fifth floor), Africa-Japan Forum (AJF) (the fifth floor), Mekong Watch (the first floor), and Oxfam Japan (the first floor). Insiders call this building an “NGO building”. Advantages of having offices in the same place include mutual benefits in sharing facilities which reduces costs, sharing information with regard to aid policy to form unified statements, sharing staff for filling gaps in their specialist knowledge and in mutual learning opportunities to improve their activities strategy. Without legal status such as being acknowledged under NPO Law, Japanese NGOs have difficulties in renting office space and securing phone lines, so this kind of cooperation helps small NGOs without this legal status to execute their activities smoothly. Without these networks, small NGOs

¹⁹ Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC), Trial & Error 239, July-August (2005): 2-8. It shows its network internationally and domestically. The three network schemes such as linking international/domestic NGOs, providing emergent relief and supporting grassroots agricultural lives are introduced. In this chapter, the first scheme of the JVC network is focused on.

have to use an individual's name for these daily commodities and it would incur a major cost to change when the individuals leave the organisations.²⁰

Sharing staff members and mutual learning opportunities can be considered the most beneficial aspects of domestic networking. As mentioned earlier, JVC and JCBL have some staff in common. This turns out to be efficient in 'plugging up holes' in the specialities of each NGO, especially as aid issues became more complicated. One example is when a symposium was held on the issue of Cambodian recovery, including topics such as agriculture, landmines and education, JVC, JCBL and other Japanese NGOs cooperated to provide specialists at each session.²¹ Staff members are also shared to improve the operation of usual activities. JVC, for example, has learnt a lot about the poverty situation and proliferation of HIV/AIDS in Africa thanks to an Africa-Japan Forum (AFJ) member who also belongs to JVC. This has helped it to improve various projects which JVC already operates in South Africa.

Sharing staff members also helps to cover staff shortages in each NGO as there is a high staff turnover among Japanese NGOs. There are several reasons for the high turnover, but the biggest reason is the low wages for heavy workload nature of NGOs. NGO work generally starts around 9-10 in the morning but the finishing time is uncertain because of the heavy work loads that individual staff are allocated. Fundraising events are usually held on weekends so NGO staff frequently sacrifice their own holidays for these events. For these reasons, there are many NGO staff, especially males, who are hoping to change their jobs and move into other fields, especially to

²⁰ Bothwell, "The challenges of growing the NPO and voluntary sector in Japan", 172 - 173.

²¹ For instance, the most recent symposium on celebrating the tenth year of the People's Forum on Cambodia, 14-15 December 2003. At the conference, JCBL was in charge of a workshop on anti-personnel landmines in Cambodia. Michiya Kumaoka, the director of JVC, gave a key note speech at the opening of the conference.

universities, colleges and research institutions.

Some examples of receiving benefits from the domestic and international networks have been discussed. However, JVC has been somewhat hesitant to contribute to building an international network, similar to that built by the other three NGOs. Although JVC has modelled itself on Oxfam International of Great Britain for its mode of operations, it has had a fear of losing its identity to more powerful international organisations. JVC has been aware that being a branch of an international NGO with an already established reputation would bring additional strong outside pressure to the Japanese government, yet at the same time, it could be in danger of losing its character and independence.

Rivalry between groups can be an obstacle to building smooth networks. Each NGO wishes to gain a good reputation individually in order to gain more support and funding from the public. Edwards (2002) states that competition (for funds, but stretching into general agency profile), disagreements on ideology and policy, lack of a common vocabulary and differing priorities could obstruct alliance building among NGOs.²² As well as inter-ministry rivalry, there is also competition among NGOs for survival.

The other three NGOs have shown difference preferences with regard to international networking. JCBL has enjoyed the benefit of collaborating with ICBL, an already established authority in the field, since its inception in 1997. The power of ‘authority’ was referred to in an example from Amnesty International, the established authority in the human rights field, as follows:

²² Michael Edwards, “Does the doormat influence the boot?: Critical thoughts on UK NGOs and international advocacy,” in Development and Advocacy, ed. Deborah Eade (London: Oxfam Great Britain, 2002), 105.

That most countries of the world were willing to let Amnesty personnel visit their prisons indicates the tremendous authority this international organisation was already beginning to assume in international affairs.²³

JCBL's organisational credibility and strength has been supported by ICBL as analysed in **Chapter 6**. Everything ICBL has enjoyed was also shared by JCBL such as media attention and praise for the Nobel Peace Prize. This international coalition has created a strong influence on the Japanese government, which has reacted to external pressure.²⁴

Both FoE Japan and GP Japan have also used their international networks to support their activities. JCBL not only enjoys sharing in the already established reputation of the ICBL, but also is able to use strategies which are well thought out in advance. For instance, FoE Japan uses 'local government foreign policy' which has been used by FoE International. The policy is to exert influence on Japanese local governments on certain environmental issues and move them to pressure the central government. Because local governments in Japan possess much influence on the central government, this strategy often works more effectively than if FoE was working on its own.

The international reputations of their head offices guarantee the branches' own standpoints within their respective countries. Their accountability and popularity have also attracted a huge number of supporters, which contributes to their activities financially. In terms of financial assistance, GP Japan receives subsidies from its

²³ Akira Iriye, Global Community: The Role of International Organisations in the Making of the Contemporary World, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 138.

²⁴ Motoko Mekata, Jirai Naki Chikyuu he – Yume wo Genjitsu ni shita Hitobito (The World without Landmines: Dream makers), (Tokyo: Iwanami Syoten, 1998), 86 - 88.

international office to compensate for deficits in its budget.

8.2.4 ‘Workshop and Symposium’ interaction type

Numerous workshops and symposiums have been held both internationally and domestically by NGOs. Some literatures on NGOs have already revealed the efficiency of these meetings.²⁵ These occasions have many objectives such as sharing information and providing opportunities for people with the same interests to build relationships.²⁶ They are also for raising public awareness and pressuring the government through open discussion in the public realm.

JVC has held a number of workshops and symposiums on a broad range of issues. They range from small-scale workshops to large conferences with official participation from the aid-related ministries. Examples of small-scale workshops include a series of seminars held every year by JVC on issues such as learning about NGO activities and issues in Japanese postal savings, and reforming Japan’s ODA. Further examples include returnees from regional offices who give presentations on their field experiences: and the use of study tours and internships. Large symposiums were held recently on issues in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the reform of Japan’s ODA.

However, one thing worth mentioning here is that these symposiums and conferences hosted by JVC have been somewhat academically oriented. Project-based workshops and seminars given by JVC staff have been quite successful but policy advocacy-related symposiums have been too academic in nature. Examples include a series of workshops on ODA reform, and, most recently, a symposium on Japan’s peace

²⁵ Literature such as Maxwell A. Cameron, Robert J. Lawson, and Brian W. Tomlin (1998) on anti-personnel landmines and Wapner (1996) on environmental NGOs. The efficiency and visibility of conferences, workshops and demonstrations are analysed in these works.

²⁶ Elizabeth T. Boris and C. Eugene Stererle, Nonprofits and Government: Collaboration and Conflict, (Washington D.C.: The Urban Institute Press, 1999), 297.

building scheme in December 2003. This resulted in too much scholarly discourse and missed the actual points of the problems and what the NGO community should do.

The academic-oriented workshops and symposiums attract people with the same interests, but only from certain parts of society, mainly students or journalists. On the other hand, they have not been appealing enough to the ‘general public’ or ‘ordinary people’ with a lower level of interest. FoE Japan, as a leading academic-oriented environmental NGO, has encountered this problem due to the difficulties with, and specialised nature of, the issues it handles. Therefore, a new strategy appealing to ordinary people is being developed by simplifying issues and encouraging general participation. In order to make workshops and symposiums more attractive and eye-catching in general, JCBL has implemented a new strategy that is the opposite to that of the JVC. This will be analysed in more detail in the following section on JCBL.

JCBL and JVC have held a number of workshops and symposiums to raise the general public awareness of the landmine issue and to show public support for the issue to the government.²⁷ As ICBL and other national campaigns have launched eye-catching demonstrations at international conferences, JCBL has also tried to make their own public events highly visible.

One example can be given of how symposiums or workshops can attract more attention. ICBL made an artificial minefield to make conference participants aware of the severity of landmine accidents and of the necessity for a global ban on AP landmines at the CCW Review conference in Geneva. Following this strategy, JCBL

²⁷ Symposia such as *Taijin Jirai no Zennmen Kinshi wo Kangaeru*: Ottawa Jyooyaku Hijyunn ni mukete (Total ban on anti-personnel landmines: Toward ratification of the Ottawa Treaty) in 1998, *Jirai Mondai to Chiiki Kaihatsu* (AP landmine issue and regional development), Kids Forum on landmine issue in 1999.

has also created a simulated minefield for a new AP landmine book launch function in July 2003 in order to raise public awareness. It was effective both in raising public awareness and making the issue familiar and easier to understand. However, with its smaller budget and limited number of staff, it was impossible for JCBL to implement advocacy campaigns at the same massive level as the ICBL. Even so, the intention of JCBL to make workshops stand out and attract more attention has made these prominent among other academic-oriented ones including those by JVC.

8.2.5 ‘Personal Relationship’ interaction type

Having a philosophy of being independent from the government or any other power in carrying out their activities, the NGO community has tried to maintain an autonomous status in Japan. Supposedly, a relationship such as ‘[sweet linkage](#)’ does not exist between any of the players in the decision-making process. This kind of relationship, however, surely exists between the players of the decision-making process in terms of infrastructure aid projects.²⁸

Trying to avoid building unhealthy relationships, the NGO community has nevertheless understood the importance of gaining access to the decision-making process and it is true that each NGO has its own strategy to establish direct ties with decision-makers. JVC, especially in policy advocacy activities, has tried making contacts with Member of Parliament (MPs). As already shown in **Chapter 6** and **7**, cooperating with politicians has resulted in a remarkable change in the government’s course on the AP landmine issue and environmental conservation.

Based on the facts of the previous cases, this type of interaction has shown itself to

²⁸ Mitsui Heavy Industrial’s ODA scandal and the former MP Suzuki’s scandal in 2001 are the most recent examples of them.

be the most efficient means for changing the government's policy. If NGOs can influence high-powered people within the decision-making process, the process would be obedient to their preferences. The problem here is that it is not the issue itself that could change decision-maker's attitudes, but rather it is the personal relationship itself that moves them to change. In that case, when decision-makers leave their positions, it may have an effect on policy which has already been decided and may even change its direction. This nature of interaction also explains one aspect of the "guru syndrome" in Japan that NGOs are dependent on their charismatic founding leaders such as Michiya Kumaoka of JVC, Yasuhiro Kitagawa of JCBL and Yukiko Soma of AAR for building personal relationships with individual decision-makers. Despite these weak points, this interaction is still important for Japanese NGOs.

One question is common to the cases of JVC and JCBL. That is, why have they cooperated mainly with politicians, but not so much with the business industry or bureaucracy? In comparison, FoE Japan and Greenpeace Japan worked closely with both bureaucrats and politicians in establishing a high standard of environmental assessment for Japan's foreign aid policy. They have also tried to involve the business community to raise their awareness toward environmental issues through mentioning possible business opportunities in ecological products as well as pursuing them to show a concern for the environment, thus fulfilling their 'social responsibility'.

In response to the above question, the answer in JVC's case lies in its position as a development NGO. There are two sides to 'development', one as seen by development NGOs such as JVC, and another as seen by the business industry. JVC considers development as a grassroots activity, involving local people and facilitating their self-help style agricultural projects. On the other hand, the business sectors often see development as infrastructure projects from which they receive benefit from

implementation. These two different viewpoints in development issues sometimes cause disputes.

For contracted construction firms, Official Development Assistance (ODA) projects deliver huge benefits and promised income. Therefore, this can create a ‘sweet linkage’ or unhealthy relationships between bureaucrats who are in charge of contracting out to private companies. Through its overseas projects, JVC has come across a number of problems such as forced migration or environmental destruction, which can be caused by large infrastructure projects. Acknowledging these problems and working to solve them, JVC has viewed the business sector as opposing its idealised development, which views Oxfam as a model. Instead of approaching them to create better infrastructure projects, JVC seems to have chosen to pursue a completely different stream from them by implementing small-scale grassroots development assistance.

JVC has been critical of Japan’s traditional aid stream not only because it produces unhealthy relationships within the decision-making process, but also because it has often neglected the interests of the most needy people in its projects. This is why JVC has turned its back on the government and operates small-scale grassroots projects overseas that the Japanese government rarely covers in its official aid strategy. Although it appears that the government’s attitude toward the JVC is becoming friendlier,²⁹ JVC nevertheless feels distant from the administering ministries and bureaucrats.

The case of JCBL is closely related to the national security of the country and is considered to possess two main problems. One concerns possible disputes with related

²⁹ For instance, Michiya Kumaoka was invited to give a seminar on Japan’s NGO community for trainee diplomats in 2003. This means that the JVC director was considered to represent the whole NGO community in Japan.

ministries such as the MOFA and the Defence Agency, which are dealing with the United States government over their possession of AP landmines in the US army bases within the borders of Japan. Because of the ministries' unfriendly attitudes, JCBL has not been cooperating with bureaucrats. At the press conference for *Landmine Monitor 2004*, JCBL was questioned by a journalist over not including US possession of AP landmines in Japan's contribution. Yasuhiro Kitagawa, the JCBL director, answers in the interview that neither Japan's Defence Agency, nor the United States army disclose information on AP landmines held in the US bases.³⁰ This illustrates the degree of unfriendliness of Japan's bureaucrats toward the AP landmine issue and related NGOs. The other point is that official policy toward landmine clearance directly benefits construction companies because of their new landmine clearance technology, which has not been entirely welcomed by the international community which is concerned about landmines (See **Chapter 6** for more detail).

Yet, in comparison to JVC, creating personal relationships with high-powered people has been a prominent aspect of JCBL's advocacy activities. Its strong personal relationships were limited to politicians rather than bureaucrats or business industry. Yet, because 'politicians' were often a coalition of MPs, foreign ministers or even Prime Ministers, who were considerably more powerful than ordinary politicians, these relationships have benefited JCBL a great deal.

As analysed in **Chapter 6**, JCBL formed close relationships with a group of MPs and the then Prime Ministers, Hashimoto and Obuchi. Having understood the importance of these personal relationships, it is important to remember that relying too much on particular people in power could endanger the organisation when they no

³⁰ Yasuhiro Kitagawa, <kitagawayasu@nifty.com> "Shitsumon ni tsuite (Answering your enquiry)," 25 September 2003, personal e-mail (25 September 1998).

longer hold these positions.

The then Minister for Foreign Affairs and later Prime Minister, Obuchi, particularly showed a strong personal interest in landmine issues and this was demonstrated in his official address at the Ottawa Conference. Some of the literature on AP landmines has mentioned the importance of his presence.³¹ In order to push the Japanese government toward a pro-ban AP landmine policy, JCBL personnel and other cooperating NGO representatives held a private meeting with Obuchi.³²

Ironically, because of the importance of his presence, it can be observed that his sudden death in 2000 has brought a new stream to Japan's AP landmine ban policy. Against JCBL's wishes and requests, the government has spent most of its special aid scheme for AP landmines in Afghanistan, in a new framework of "Peace Building". The special scheme was established according to the Foreign Affairs Minister's pledge at the Ottawa Conference in order to support AP landmine victims. Additionally, the continuation of further overseas funding for the AP landmine issue is said to be determined on a case by case basis. Apparently, recent winds have started blowing against the JCBL.

Both FoE Japan and GP Japan are skilled in building personal relationships with authorities. As the environmental issues contain more academic aspects relating to natural science than purely developmental issues, environmental NGOs tend to employ professionals in these areas. Therefore, they often appear to possess more technical knowledge than those bureaucrats who are constantly transferring from one position to another. As a result, in order to share mutually beneficial information, NGOs and

³¹ Japanese AP landmine-related literature such as Mekata (1998) and Osa (2003).

³² This information was privately given by Yasuhiro Kitagawa in personal communication during the author's fieldwork from March to June 2003.

government officials get closer to each other in comparison to other ODA areas. Ikuko Matsumoto, a programme director of FoE Japan, appreciated cooperation from government officials at the time of establishing the environmental standard in Japan's foreign aid.³³

GP Japan has also increased its use of strategies for building personal relationships. It has made personal contacts with government delegations by taking advantage of official occasions such as receptions at international negotiations or interacting in the corridors at environmental conferences where governmental delegates are unable to escape.

The main aim of GP Japan in attending receptions is to obtain personal contact details from governmental officials. Once they obtain these contact details, access is easily established via emails or phone calls, which is far easier than trying to make official appointments in person. Although there is no comparison to face-to-face meetings in terms of making an impression and exerting influence, these attempts at contact are better than simply accepting the rejection of an appointment request. Making appointments with governmental officials in person is not easy in Japan unless there is a special reason such as the visit of internationally famous figures. The previous chapter has already analysed this difficulty using an example from GP Japan and the governmental officials of three different ministries (See **Chapter 7:** 222). Many international NGOs have attempted to talk directly to delegates at the COP 3 in Kyoto. This stems from the same reasoning that official appointments are hard to make, yet, it is also a more direct form of action to talk to decision-makers in the corridor rather than waiting for opportunities such as press conferences.

³³ Ikuko Matsumoto, interviewed by the author, 23 January 2004.

The other outstanding strategy of Japan's environmental NGOs is that they understand the structure of the decision-making process in Japan and learn when and how to act in order to get the best results. As the third case study has shown, politicians supported FoE lobbying of the government by giving advice from a political perspective. This kind of information cannot be obtained without inside support. Building personal relationships with decision-makers brings not only 'direct influence' on on-going policy, but also knowledge for future use by NGOs.

There is another means of building personal relationships with decision-makers. NGO staff can become politicians themselves. This seems to be the quickest and easiest means of having access to the decision-making process because it is equivalent to being an insider. Even if they only become MPs of opposition parties, not a ruling party, they would still have many more opportunities to express their opinions and ideas such as during parliamentary debates. In fact, some NGO personnel have chosen this way to go into politics.

However, there is a drawback. The JVC director has made an interesting comment about NGO personnel becoming politicians. He stated that it would be hard for NGOs to maintain autonomy or independence once they become part of the power structure because that 'sweet smell' of power is undeniable. He also mentioned a danger of being too visible when NGO staff became politicians. He cited the case of the former MP, referred to earlier, who lost her office following a money scandal which was leaked suddenly in parliament. This was despite her being well-known for accusing the former MP Suzuki of NGO and Official Development Assistance (ODA) scandals in 2001 (See **Chapter 5:** 142).³⁴ Her scandal brought disgrace to the NGO that she once committed

³⁴ Michiya Kumaoka, interviewed by the author, 17 June 2003.

herself to. Yet, Kumaoka did not fully approve of the opposite situation whereby NGOs should maintain an “honest poverty”, which is the usual expectation for the way a Japanese NGO community should be, because it could mean they were essentially ‘powerless’. It would be impossible for NGOs to fight against the established powers if they remained so. Apparently JVC is now standing at a crossroads in regards to cooperating with powers to become more influential in the decision-making process in Japan.

8.2.6 ‘Media Usage’ interaction type

Even a small organisation has its own media strategy. It is impossible to ignore the influence of the media on the public. Naturally, NGOs have their media strategies as well, however, they are not always effective.

JVC has experienced both the good and bad sides of the media. From a positive perspective, JVC has become well-known to the Japanese public by appearing in written media such as in newspapers and magazines, and also on air. There are a number of articles about and by JVC staff such as Kumaoka, Takahashi and Maki Sato who has been in charge of JVC’s Afghanistan projects. These media appearances have contributed to raising JVC’s reputation and correspondingly the donations received.³⁵

From a negative perspective, JVC has struggled to build personal relationships with journalists. Although JVC policy advocacy staff have tried to establish close networks with journalists, they seem to see things differently. It seems that befriending journalists does not mean that they will necessarily write favourable articles.

³⁵ The JVC donation officer said that immediately after JVC staff talked about a situation in Afghanistan, the level of donations rose, but soon decreased. Mitsuko Tomiyasu, interviewed by the author, 19 May 2003.

An example from JCBL shows the reverse situation. One active journalist, who has a close relationship with JCBL, has written a lot of positive articles about the organisation and its operations. Although he experienced suffering from an AP landmine accident that made him personally interested in the issue, it is still possible to say that his close relationship with JCBL has worked to produce favourable articles.

The question of what makes these situations different is difficult to answer. Many factors are involved, such as the individual's personal character or circumstances. However, one explanation may be that confidence building between NGOs and the media owes a lot to the leadership of NGOs in Japan and both leaders of JVC and JCBL have strong reputations. Kumaoka of JVC has been well known for his past activities and statements in the media. Kitagawa, the JCBL director, has a high social standing for his long dedication to AP landmine issues. In January 2004, Kitagawa was even awarded one of the most honourable humanitarian assistance awards in Japan by the Asahi Newspaper (*Asahi Fukushima Sho*). Other staff, who have been focused on by the media were either eye-catching (for example, a JVC nurse, Yoshino, and a JCBL staff member, Mekata, for their activities as women) or topic raising (JVC staffs, Sato and Tanigawa, for their on-the-spot activities). The JVC policy advocacy team has not been given much attention because they are neither eye-catching figures nor working visibly in the field.

Based on these observations, the Japanese media is shown to deal only with those already established authorities rather than rising young stars out of fear of a possible backlash. In addition, general readers or audiences are normally interested in exciting issues covered by on-the-spot reports. This is partly how Peace Winds Japan (PWJ) has become a 'media favourite' with its visible overseas activities. However, the media's attitude carries with it a danger of Japanese NGOs suffering from "guru syndrome",

which many Western NGOs have experienced. This is not only in regard to the original leaders being opposed to organisational change, but also in the sense that after a generation change in charismatic leadership, organisations lose their relationships with many actors including the media.

JCBL which has the shortest history among the NGOs observed in this thesis, probably has the most prominent media strategy of the four this research considers. There have been forty-nine articles about landmine issues that have appeared in major newspapers, magazines and on television between 1992 and 1997.³⁶ Fourteen of them were written by the journalist, Kazumoto Momose. As mentioned earlier, JCBL has a friendly relationship with a few journalists, including Momose, and his articles on AP landmine issues have favoured JCBL's activities unintentionally. Momose has also written for JCBL newsletters which has increased their accountability because of the fact that a professional journalist has contributed. This accountability has made JCBL's newsletters a strong tool for advocacy. As well as journalists, photographers have also held exhibitions on AP landmines. Based on this situation, a question is raised; why is JCBL able to establish relationships with journalists to create media favour for its activities?

One reason has already been given in the case of the Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC) in terms of building confidence between NGO staff and media. It can be said that a mutual confidence has existed between the well-known director of JCBL and various journalists. The journalists have trust in the director in addition to their friendly personal relationship and this trust has become a driving force for them to write articles. The second reason could be the level of importance and the narrow focus of the AP

³⁶ Data sourced from a handout from the landmine workshop at the 10th anniversary of the People's Forum of Cambodia Japan (PEFOC, Japan) in 14-15 December 2003.

landmine issue. Needless to say that the more important and narrowly focused the topic, the more interesting for the media.

There are two trends in media communication. The first is a major blurring of the line between news and entertainment and the second is the populism of television news.³⁷ The AP landmine issue was by no means entertainment, however its negotiation process has caught the media's attention as an exciting international political game between major powers and NGOs. In this way, it was made an 'exciting topic'. The active support of Princess Diana had always been a media favourite and has added a touch of colour to the issue as well. There is, however, a potential backlash from gaining too much media attention. For instance, the media is often criticised for using third world poverty imagery, which has been named 'aid pornography'.³⁸ Even so, the impact and efficiency of such images for gaining immediate sympathy from people cannot be denied. In the case of the AP landmine issue, pictures of the victims were eye-catching.

The AP landmine issue was also a simple issue. No one would consider that AP landmines had a positive purpose for human society and so this topic was straight-forward and easy for journalists to take a side on. People's emotions could be easily manipulated through reading these articles. This is also the point that distinguishes JVC in terms of its media relationships. Although there are a number of criticisms and problems, overseas development projects were supposed to be beneficial for receiver states and their local populations. This controversy in overseas development

³⁷ Ian Smilie, The Alms Bazaar: Altruism under fire- non-profit organisations and international development, (London: IT Publications, 1995), 133.

³⁸ Much of the literature has discussed 'aid pornography' but see Tom Riddell, Foreign Aid Reconsidered (London: James Currey Ltd., 1987) for a classic debate.

projects divides pro- and anti- development journalism, and makes it difficult for the media to produce unified favourable work.

As well as JCBL newsletters, publishing books can also be defined as promoting the issue through the media. This method was also used by other AP landmine-related NGOs in Japan. AAR, one NGO cooperating with JCBL, has published a series of picture books on AP landmine issues using a character called ‘Sunny the Rabbit’. It has a simple but powerful message: if we clear one AP landmine, we can plant one flower in that area. Young readers receive its message and pass it on to older readers. They constitute a large number of voters in Japan at the end, which is important in a democratic state. This series of books has sold around 550,000 copies and made a strong appearance in the media as well as contributing to public awareness. Tadahisa Fukiura, a special advisor for AAR, commented on the surprising success of this book by stating that, “parliamentary debate admitted that only a kids’ picture book changed the course of the Japanese government toward AP landmine”.³⁹

Publishing books is a widely used strategy by environmental NGOs. Environmental conservation issues often appear in Japan’s Yen Loan Official Development Assistance (ODA) projects. With its huge budget (**Appendix 2: Figure 6**), Yen Loan projects include infrastructure projects such as constructing public facilities. These projects frequently affect local people and a few of Japan’s past ODA projects are said to have caused forced migration and destruction of the environment. FoE Japan and GP Japan have both been concerned about these problems and have published a number of books and brochures on the issue.

³⁹ Refer to AAR homepage. Tadamasa Fukiura, “Aratana Shimei – Jirai Haizetsu (New mission – abolishment of anti-personnel landmines)”, Footstep of Association for Aid and Relief, n.d., <<http://aarjapan.gr.jp/info/fukiura2.html>> (11 July 2004).

8.2.7 'Campaign' interaction type

The final type of interaction to be analysed here can be considered the most publicly appealing and fair method and has also been broadly used by Western and Asian NGOs to shape public consensus. For instance, operating a global or domestic campaign to influence public opinion polls has become a major activity of NGOs in the 1990s. Western NGOs such as Care, Oxfam and World Vision operate several global campaigns. Some Asian NGOs have also operated campaigns on various issues such as local development, gender, and empowerment. Occasionally, they operate in conjunction with their counterparts in the West. Chapman and Fisher (2002) describe two such campaigns: the promotion of breastfeeding and the use of child labour in the carpet industries in Ghana and India, and stated, "collaboration between different organisations can therefore help in moving the campaign forward. Even without formal collaboration, a variety of NGOs working with different arenas is helpful".⁴⁰

Following this trend, Japanese NGOs have launched many campaigns. However, conclusions drawn from their past campaigns did not always give the same results as those experienced by other NGOs. This is where a unique feature of the Japanese political climate surrounding NGOs appears. Before discussing this, a few campaigns operated by the four NGOs considered will be examined.

JVC in pursuit of its main objectives in implementing overseas development projects, rather than taking political action, had not had large campaigns until the end of the 1980s. Acknowledging the efficiency of running campaigns in 1993 it ran a

⁴⁰ Jennifer Chapman and Thomas Fisher, "The effectiveness of NGO campaigning: lessons from practice," in Development and Advocacy, ed., Deborah Eade (London: Oxfam Great Britain, 2002), 120 - 121.

campaign to stop the Japanese government from supplying unnecessary agricultural chemicals to Cambodia.⁴¹

JCBL, as can be clearly seen from its name, started as a national ‘campaign’ for a global ban on AP landmines. It has been continually concerned with operating campaigns such as signature collection, postcard sending, and poster competitions. Through these campaigns, JCBL has contributed to public awareness/education and pressured the Japanese government as already analysed in **Chapter 6**. Among these campaigns, the signature collection campaign, which was enhanced by the use of images of landmine victims, was successful in influencing the government.

Other advocacy NGOs, beginning with Amnesty International, have adopted signature collection in order to appeal to the public. JCBL also launched a postcard campaign. Its goal lies in increasing public awareness and in showing concern for people. With regard to the AP landmine issue, each national campaign, including the Cambodian campaign, had a series of signature gatherings. The work of the Cambodian campaign is praised as follows:

The Cambodian campaigners worked hard to build public awareness and support for the ban and the international conference. They launched a massive signature campaign, gathering names at temples, markets, and schools throughout the country⁴²

JCBL implemented the first signature gathering for submission among organisations

⁴¹ ODA Study Group and Japan Consumers Association, ed., Stoppu! Kiken na Nooyaku Enjyo: Kanbojia syakai ni ima nani ga hitsuyoo ka (Stop Hazardous Agricultural Chemical Assistance to Cambodia: What does Cambodian society need now?), (Tokyo: Symposium booklet, 1993).

⁴² Cameron, Lawson and Tomlin, To Walk Without Fear: The Global Movement to Ban Landmines, 30.

with the same interest in a global ban on landmines in August, 1997. In this way, it has shifted its focus to a broader Japanese public. As a result of this target shift, JCBL collected 35,283 signatures in 1997 and they were handed to the Foreign Minister by Tun Channalet. His presence added more importance to the signature campaign through image enhancement, which will be discussed in more detail later.

Briefly however, 'image improvement' was used to create an image or icon of the topic in order to dramatise JCBL's campaigns. Despite its relatively short history and small scale of the organisation compared with its mainstay, JCBL was unable to create its own icon such as Princess Diana was for ICBL, instead using Channalet from the ICBL.

Princess Diana was the icon for ICBL. Her tragic death has actually worked to produce a favourable stream towards the global movement to ban landmines. Her established fame has enabled ICBL and the landmine topic to be more visual. For JCBL, the wheelchaired Channalet, without both legs from two landmine accidents has given rise to immediate sympathy from the public. His presence has also influenced the Foreign Minister, and his personal interest became a strong driving force to change Japan's policy from anti- to pro-ban. Again, in coming together with a 'campaign' type of interaction, the submission of signatures collect by the landmine victim dramatised it and gave it a visual effect.

Both FoE Japan and GP Japan operate a number of campaigns supporting actual projects and advocacy effort. One feature of these campaigns is that they are divided into international and domestic areas.

GP Japan, strongly influenced by its head office, has participated in international campaigns such as anti-whaling, anti-nuclear waste and power, protecting forests and global warming. GP Japan has stressed advocacy campaigns through the sending of

postcards/emails, giving seminars and publishing reports rather than through actual protest activities that Greenpeace itself has been well known for.

Because of the federal nature of its organisations, which means local branches enjoy more freedom, FoE Japan has launched a more grassroots type of campaign in Japan. A few projects are implemented outside of Japan, such as a “Tree Planting” project campaign in China, a campaign that supports NGOs and scientists working on protecting hot spots in Siberia, and doing study tours in relation to these campaigns. At a domestic level, FoE Japan adopts local governments’ foreign policy. Through working closely with local governments on various environmental issues, FoE indirectly pressures the central government using the authority and access of local governments.

8.3 Conclusion: Too Much Dependence on Personal Relationship

Based on the above analysis, the answers to the question set out earlier in this chapter regarding the most efficient means for Japanese NGOs to exert their influence are as follows:

1. Building personal relationships with decision-makers is very effective as was presented in the examples of JCBL and the two environmental NGOs. However, because they have not influenced the policies themselves, the decisions are subject to the changing whims of decision-makers.
2. The most prominent example of the first point is the case of Japan’s policy toward the AP landmines. After the death of Keizo Obuchi, the policy has been toned down and further support for AP landmine victims will be decided on a case by case basis.
3. Coalition building with highly reputable international NGOs provides credibility and legitimacy for Japanese NGOs. Despite the drawback of being franchised by a head

office, it is undeniable that JCBL, FoE Japan and GP Japan have enjoyed certain benefits. Therefore, JVC has started building an international network as well as a domestic one.

4. Media cooperation can be a strong tool through which Japanese NGOs can be influential. Not only being friendly with journalists, but also publishing independently can be an efficient tool for obtaining support from the public as well as raising awareness for the issues. However, as can be seen from the money scandal involving the former MP in 2001, it has to be remembered that the media can easily create a backlash against this NGO-turned-MP.

As foreign aid policy was formed within the exclusive decision-making process and attracted no criticism from outside, there was no space for an ‘outsider’ to exert influence. However, in the 1990s, international criticism against Japan’s traditional foreign aid policy created an opportunity for NGOs to be ‘partners’ with the government.

Having tried to grow beyond the government’s expectation, the four NGOs in these case studies have actually influenced the decision-making processes in relation to aid using both official and unofficial interactions. Still, there are some issues remaining such as too much dependence on personal relationships with high-powered decision-makers, which creates a tendency for weakness in the continuity of policy. However, it is difficult to deny that the ‘outsider’ has made a breakthrough into the exclusive decision-making process and become a major challenger.

Has the Japanese government put up with this new and growing challenger? What is its reaction to the challenger? Is the Japanese political climate Western or Asian or a totally new type? Taking new events in international relations into account, the next concluding chapter will answer these questions that were first set out in this thesis. As

well as answering these questions, the chapter will outline the new direction that Japan has started heading towards in terms of its aid strategy. This discussion will lead to some policy recommendations for the NGO community in Japan and these will comprise the final conclusion to this thesis.

Chapter 9

Conclusion:

Although facing difficult challenges, there is hope for Japanese NGOs

For a long time the Japanese government had a bad international reputation due to its 'faceless' foreign policy. It was so named because Japan was considered to be good at providing money but not human resources for international demands. Its foreign aid was infrastructure-concentrated with huge budgets which were said to neglect certain grassroots needs. International criticism reached its peak during the Gulf War in 1991 and left Japan with "Gulf War Trauma", a sentiment of deep humiliation due to the near-total lack of appreciation shown for the large amounts of money it provided for the Kuwaiti liberation effort. The Japanese population also demanded justification of Japan's foreign aid spending of 'taxpayers' money'. Japan needed to create a friendly and efficient aid donor image domestically and internationally.

A new aid strategy including cooperation with Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) was set up to counter international criticism. This new aid strategy was launched in 1989. Its aim was to fight against both domestic and international criticism by using NGOs as supplementary actors to the government which would provide a 'friendly face' for Japan's contributions to the international community. For more than a decade, this cooperative relationship has endured .

In parallel to the growing popularity and importance of NGOs in international development work, the production of NGO-related research began to flourish. However, literature on Japanese NGOs was still scarce. Several works have discussed ideals for

foreign aid implementation from the viewpoint of NGOs. However, in these works, the main focus was on realising more effective development, not the modes of operation of NGOs themselves.

Some NGO practitioners have contributed to academic works based on their personal experience. Most of these contributions are in English. They are most often about Western (Northern/European) and Asian (Southern/Asian) NGOs and few of them have dealt with Japanese NGOs. Even in Japanese, studies focusing on the modes of operation of Japanese NGOs remain scarce.

There are several reasons for this significant lack of research, such as a language barrier, the closed nature of Japanese NGOs, and the lack of time available to NGO staff to publish accounts of their own experiences. A further important reason is the situation in which Japan finds itself.

Japan identifies with both developed countries and the Asian region at the same time. Northern/European NGOs overlook Japan because it is an Asian state. On the other hand, Southern/Asian NGOs do not identify with Japan because it is in the group of developed, aid donor states. This double-faceted nature impacts on the political atmosphere surrounding the NGO community in Japan.

Keeping in mind the nature of this situation, this thesis has revealed the mode of operations of Japanese NGOs using three case studies. The main focus was on their relationships with the Japanese government and how they exert influence on Japan's aid decision-making process and aid policy. In addition to this focus, the thesis has also helped the gap in the international NGO research. The next section presents the findings of this thesis and outlines its contribution to the literature on Japanese NGOs.

Study Objectives Analysed in this Thesis

At the beginning of this thesis, four problem statements were outlined. They are all necessary in order to create a basis for further analysis of NGOs' modes of operation and influence on official aid policy. These problem statements or questions were:

- 1. What is the role of NGOs in Japan's official aid policy?**
- 2. What are the actual modes of operations of Japanese NGOs which are influential?**
- 3. What has been the government-NGO relationship in Japan?**
- 4. What is the future direction of Japan's foreign aid policy and what can be recommended?**

The above four points were all significant when analysing Japanese NGOs but the third statement is especially noteworthy. It was assumed that by focusing on the official and unofficial interactions between NGOs and the Japanese government, modes of behaviour would be revealed which differed from other Northern/European and Southern/Asian NGOs' behaviour, as identified by previous research. Therefore, focusing more heavily on the third problem statement, the government-NGO relationship in Japan, the following three more detailed research objectives were set out in the thesis:

- 1) How far has the government-NGO relationship changed in the foreign aid of Japan?**
- 2) How do NGOs exercise their influence over aid policy from outside the decision-making process?**
- 3) Where does the mode of operation of Japan's NGOs fit in the existing NGO theories?**

Answering Questions

Before moving on to subsequent issues, it is necessary to clarify **the position of the Japanese NGO community in Japan's foreign aid policy** as addressed by the first problem statement of: "What is the role of NGOs in Japan's official aid policy?"

Originally, NGOs were merely 'supplementary actors' used to legitimise the Japanese government's foreign aid and provide it with a human 'face' to counter criticism of Japan's 'faceless' aid policies. However, they have gradually become a powerful tool to reflect opinions from outside the exclusive decision-making process. NGOs' growing influence has irritated the government which feels driven out of Japan's official aid strategy.

Two examples of this 'side-lining' have been the "South-South cooperation" and the new involvement of the Self Defence Force (SDF) into Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2004. "South-South cooperation" has aimed to fund directly local NGOs in developing countries, but this also has meant bypassing Japanese NGOs at the same time; most are experiencing financial difficulties. In this light, it can be concluded that "South-South Cooperation" can lead to neglect of Japanese NGOs.

The year 2004 marked a significant turning point for the role of NGOs in Japan's official aid policy. The new linkage between ODA and the SDF was created during the Iraq War. The Japanese Prime Minister made an official statement on 8 June 2004, in a phone meeting with the United States President that the SDF would be one of the two front wheels of Japan's ODA in the future, along with the provision of financial subsidies. This indicates that JSDF could take over the role of NGOs in providing actual aid operations. There is yet to be any concrete evidence of this transition but one should bear in mind this future possibility. Previous chapters of this thesis have answered the following questions.

1) How far has the government-NGO relationship changed in decision-making relating to the foreign aid of Japan?

Originally, in the provision of Japan's "Visible Japanese Aid (VJA)", Japanese NGOs were recognised as operational partners with the government. The government's intention was to take advantage of their established good reputation, their long-time experience at the grassroots level and their skill in making official aid policy more efficient and more visible to the international community without spending much of the country's own resources. Despite this great wealth of experience and advantageous attributes, NGOs remained supplementary actors to the Japanese government.

However, by participating in the actual official aid policy as operational partners, NGOs have gradually become powerful challengers to the established decision-making system, thus stepping beyond the government's expectations. In order to restrict their growing influence, the government has used two tactics. Firstly, it set up a series of sub-official meetings ostensibly gain outside opinions and create 'transparency' in the aid decision-making process. Despite the government's intention, NGOs have used these sub-official meetings to exert their influence by disclosing records of the meetings on the internet in order to create public pressure on the government.

Secondly, the financial assistance used to control NGO activities is a complex arrangement of financial assistance involving project reimbursement. This ensures that NGOs imposed a type of 'self-restriction' whereby projects were limited strictly to government-sanctioned policy, in order to guarantee reimbursement.

In the area of financial assistance, the government has tried to control NGOs by limiting funding for too many NGOs and instigating a complicated procedure for the approval of such funding. Although NGOs have struggled in the system, it has also provided opportunities for Japanese NGOs to strengthen their own organisational

structure while searching for new sources of financial assistance. In order to gain international funding, they were required to improve their standard of professionalism to match their powerful overseas competitors.

2) How do NGOs exercise their influence over aid policy from outside the decision-making process?

It was for a long time believed that it was impossible for outsiders to exert influence over the exclusive decision-making process in Japan. However, NGOs have managed to exercise their influence. The manner in which they were able to do so has been explained in this thesis. The following three types of interactions were found to be the most important:

- 1) Building personal relationships with high-powered decision-makers
- 2) Coalition building internationally/domestically
- 3) Cooperation with the media.

The first type of interaction, building personal relationships, is considered to be a double edged sword. As the two cases of JCBL, Greenpeace Japan and FoE Japan have shown, it was relatively straightforward to create policies favourable to NGOs by encouraging sympathetically dispositions among the power-players in the process. For instance, the late Prime Minister, Keizo Obuchi, was moved strongly and emotionally by the sight of anti-personnel (AP) landmine victims. He not only signed the Ottawa Treaty but also set up a new aid scheme in relation to AP landmines. In the environmental sector, NGOs have taken advantage of the domestic Japanese political system and individual personalities of decision-makers in order to encourage the adoption of a higher standard of environmental conservation for Japan's Yen Loan projects. These interactions required substantial prior research and preparation but resulted in huge successes. Having considered the advantages of these personal

relationships, the Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC) Policy Advocacy staff have started making personal approaches to politicians involved in the decision-making process.

However, although great successes have been brought by this interaction, the other edge of the sword has shown the ‘instability’ of the tactic. The efficacy of this type of interaction depends largely on individual decision-makers. It can therefore be dissolved very rapidly when the decision makers leave their high-powered positions. The special aid scheme for AP landmines is now in a precarious position because its sympathetic patron, Obuchi, died suddenly in 2000 and the succeeding administrations have not paid much attention to this issue. Any further subsidies to this scheme are provided on a ‘case by case’ basis, which means there is no concrete guarantee of future funding from the government.

Environmental NGOs often face having to make a choice as to which issues are to be pursued in accordance with decision-makers’ personal estimations of the importance of various issues’. Yasuko Matsumoto, a former campaigner for Greenpeace Japan, states that decision-makers were less interested in ozone layer depletion than recycling policy because the topic did not provide a concrete visible result that can be used in election campaigns.¹

The second interaction which has augmented NGO influence in policy-making, coalition building internationally/domestically, is efficient both in terms of creating unified pressure on the government and in its cost effectiveness thanks to the sharing of facilities such as office space and utilities. Taking advantage of the sensitivity of the Japanese government towards ‘international concerns’, Japanese NGOs have cooperated

¹ Yasuko Matsumoto, interviewed by the author, 20 January 2004.

with international NGOs to create pressure from outside the country. At the same time, JVC has cooperated with other Japanese development NGOs to form a strong national network. ODA reform campaigns have been carried out by this network, though it can become fragmented by involving too many actors. JCBL's coalition with International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) is a clear example of influencing local central governments via international collaborative networks. Greenpeace Japan and FoE Japan have learnt efficient operative strategies from their international head offices, and benefit from their experiences in other states.

On the other hand, inherent in cooperating with bigger and stronger international organisations is the potential danger of 'assimilation'. This is the possibility that Japanese NGOs become merely small branch-like units of their international partners. Japanese NGOs have to sacrifice some independent ideas in order to gain support from, and be a part of large scale international NGOs. JVC's main concern with cooperating too closely with international NGOs lies in this point. JCBL has already experienced the withdrawal of ICBL from its own campaign on the cluster bomb issue. Starting as part of international bodies, Greenpeace Japan and FoE Japan have faced the same concern. However, as it provides no financial subsidies, FoE International has a more hands-off policy toward each national branch and FoE Japan can thus maintain more of its own distinct national character. Conversely, Greenpeace Japan has been strongly influenced by the concerns of Greenpeace International.

As the third category of interaction, media cooperation has always been a strong tool for forming consensus and thus influencing policy. It has been used effectively by decision-makers historically and is also used by NGOs. It can be said that the AP landmine issue was made an international issue due in great part to the appearance of Princess Diana in the media as a champion of the cause. Environmental issues also

gained media attention during international conferences such as the Earth Summit in 1992 in Rio de Janeiro and an earlier series of Conference of Parties (COPs). This is because the conferences were considered to be exciting power games between world leaders on the environmental topic, which divines the future of the Earth.

All NGOs analysed in this thesis possess some form of dedicated media strategy. The most common tactic is to befriend journalists and write to newspapers and journals. Writing and publishing on the issue independently also serve to promote their activities and deliver their messages directly.

Nevertheless, NGOs must be wary of backlash from the media. This thesis has shown the rejection of an NGO at the Afghanistan recovery conference in 2001 to be a point in case. The backlash from media came after the incident that media made one NGO a centre of the news. The NGO's attendance to the conference got rejected by one MP because the MP, who had a huge impact on Japan's foreign policy including the Afghanistan recovery, thought the NGO as 'not obedient' to him. The NGO was made as a hero, which defied the powerful MP. However, the situation changed after the NGO held a press conference about the rejection case. The director of the NGO wore an expensive business suit on the site, who was expected to be honest poverty. As a result, the NGO lost popularity very quickly and media took no time to start criticising the director.² The media made the NGO a brave hero fighting against the authority one day but made it an arrogant figure next day. The case of Tsujimoto, a NGO director-turned-politician, was similar. The Japanese saying, "stand out from the crowd and you just invite trouble for yourself" is reflected in this phenomenon.

The conclusion drawn from these three case studies was that building personal

² An inside anonymous story, May 2003 at the JVC office.

relationships with decision-makers is the most effective and fastest means of creating policy favourable to NGOs in Japan. However, it is subject to changes in policy-personnel, and is thus an unstable source of influence.

3) Where does the mode of operation of Japan's NGOs fit in the existing NGO theories?

Another key concern of this thesis was to establish which grouping Japanese NGOs are closest to in terms of their mode of operations, Northern/European or Southern/Asian. Based on the analysis carried out, it can be concluded that Japanese NGOs share traits of both the Northern/European and Southern/Asian NGOs but that their essential nature is more similar to that of Southern/Asian NGOs. Japanese NGOs have tried to follow the Northern/European example, in which NGOs are important collaborative partners with governments and are able to exert influence via institutionalised means. However, they have had to operate largely more like Southern/Asian NGOs, preferring unofficial modes of interaction. They have had to seek ways of operating under the Japanese government's control even though this control is more subtle and nuanced than that of other more oppressive Asian governments.

Peculiarities of Japanese NGOs can be shown in terms of their surroundings and mode of operations. Their circumstances show aspects of the Northern/European mode of operating such as declaring NGOs as partners regardless of reality, despite the fact that the government controls Japanese NGOs by quiet and subtle means.

Like Western governments, the Japanese government accept that NGOs are important aid partners and this attitude is confirmed most often in official annual reports on Japan's ODA. NGOs are eligible to receive financial subsidies and institutional status, most notably under the Non-Profit Organisation (NPO) Law. Importantly, there

is no restriction for them in accessing international funding such as from international organisations and donors, whereas some Asian governments strictly prohibit this, reasoning that NGOs can turn into agents for foreign powers.

At the same time, however, the Japanese government has created subtle ways of controlling NGOs. As stated before, in the area of financial assistance, by using a later payment system, the government is able to impose 'self-restriction' upon NGOs themselves. A decrease in the budget for the NGO Project Subsidy (NPS) and an increase in Grants for Grassroots Projects (GGP) also display the government's intention to benefit aid distribution via local governments in developing countries rather than via Japanese NGOs.

The NPO Law was welcomed at first as it provided advanced support for Japanese NGOs, equivalent to Northern/European ones. Yet in reality, various services allowed for by the law are available only to those powerful and well-established NGOs which meet criteria set by the government. This has resulted in making the strong stronger and the weak weaker, which has created a division in the NGO community. This phenomenon has the potential to affect the development of domestic networks.

In this environment, the four NGOs analysed in the case studies have exhibited behaviours which are closer to those of Southern/Asian NGOs. They have relied on personal relationships to move decision-makers towards the creation of favourable policies, built networks with international NGOs in order to gain outside support, and approached journalists and newspapers reporters. Dependence on individual decision-makers implies that Japanese NGOs have to use the political 'back door' rather than the 'front door', and this clarifies that they lack the institutionalised pathways for accessing the official policy making process that the Japanese government has lauded officially. These interactions are certainly used by Northern/European NGOs as well,

but they also have the legitimate access to central authority through institutionalised means which Southern/Asian NGOs sorely lack.

Because the central government has a reactive attitude toward *Gai-atsu* (outside pressure), it is natural for Japanese NGOs to build networks with international NGOs in seeking stronger support from the outside. Yet it also means that they are not able to move the government on their own from the inside without those external pressures. Without outside pressure, Japanese NGOs lack sufficient power to be adequately influential, even though there is a potential danger of becoming branch-like units of powerful international organisations.

Other Contributions to the Field of Study

This thesis also makes contributions to the fields of Japanese aid and NGO research:

(1) Highlighting the importance of Japanese NGOs in the aid decision-making process

For the field of study of Japan's aid, this thesis has emphasised the importance and impact of Japanese NGOs on the aid decision-making process. Although this decision-making process has long been popular with a number of renowned researchers, it was often overlooked in earlier NGO studies. Foreign aid scholars understood the importance of Japanese NGOs and showed their concern by referring to them in the foreign aid context. In addition, this thesis has provided concrete case studies to prove the impact. There are several reasons for the lack of work in this field but one key reason is the insufficient understanding of NGOs from an academic perspective. A lack of understanding often led to NGOs being overlooked as a possible research topic. Another factor is that NGOs do not have enough time to conduct academic research of their own, and tend to reflect a closed nature to outsiders. This thesis has overcome these issues by carrying out intensive fieldwork with Japanese NGOs in order to obtain

‘insider’ viewpoints. At the same time, political viewpoints at a macro level were maintained throughout to avoid a bias - a trap which many practitioner-based studies have fallen into.

(2) Filling a gap in general NGO studies

As well as highlighting the importance of NGO activity in Japan’s foreign aid study, this thesis has filled a gap in general NGO studies, which is usually discussed from Northern/European and Southern/Asian perspectives in terms of North-South issues. Japan falls between North and South as well as between East and West, which has resulted in a gap in the whole field. By focusing on the mode of behaviour of Japanese NGOs, the thesis has gone some way to bridging this gap.

Further research is needed regarding South Korean and Chinese NGOs. South Korea has turned from an aid receiving state to an aid donating state, the number of NGOs is increasing drastically and their influence is growing.³ China, although still considered a ‘developing country’, is set to become one of the world largest economic powers in the future. Therefore, it can be presumed that the modes of operation of ‘North Eastern NGOs’ can be revealed by examining these two cases in addition to Japanese NGOs. It is assumed that there are differences in the political atmosphere and international and domestic circumstances in these two states, but this proposition remains to be examined by future studies.

(3) Practical Contribution: A Clear Strategy increasing influence on aid policy

By identifying the most effective interactions for influencing the Japanese government itself, this thesis has contributed to improving the practical strategies of the

³ Shinnichi Shigetomi, Asia no Kokka to NGO: 15 ka Koku no Hikaku Kentoo (Asian States and NGOs: Comparative Study on 15 States) (Tokyo: Akashi Syoten, 2001). See the chapter on South Korea.

Japanese NGO community. Certainly, the findings of the thesis are not universal internationally, but they are at least able to give some direction to Japanese NGOs.

Recommendation for the more effective Implementation of Japanese Foreign Aid

This thesis has provided an overview of Japan's official aid policy focusing on the role of Japanese NGOs in its implementation, their relationship with the Japanese government, and methods of exerting influence over the decision-making process. It was concluded that although Japanese NGOs generally have a Northern/European style of operation on the surface, they are struggling to be influential from outside the formal decision-making process of the government, itself which exhibits behavioural characteristics typical of Asian governments, such as subtle control and suppression. These controls over NGOs are so subtle that they are not apparent to outsiders, but nonetheless force NGOs into imposing 'self-restrictions' to be favoured by the government, which is a major funding provider for their activities.

This thesis has also found efforts and results of creating various ways of being influential by some Japanese NGOs analysed in the case studies. Since the whole thesis has been an analysis of that aspect, no further description is given here, but that is why the thesis has called them a 'challenger' to the government.

Because Japan's foreign aid is now at a crucial turning point, there are several recommendations to be made for improving Japanese foreign aid implementation. These are as follows:

1) Breaking the possible stronger linkage between ODA and Self Defence Force

(SDF): The potential use of the SDF in the implementation of Japanese ODA, which was suggested by the Japanese Prime Minister, Koizumi Jyunichiro, at a meeting with the United States president, George W. Bush, poses many issues, such as the replacement of NGOs in a new scheme for Peace Building, for example, which is of

particular interest to this thesis. Actually, sending the JSDF to conflict-affected areas became a part of the cause of the kidnapping of Japanese people in Iraq, which happened in April 2004. This new strategy can trigger a threat to the security of ‘citizens’ working in these areas, especially humanitarian aid workers. Rather than further developing this policy, it is strongly recommended that the government maintain close cooperation with NGOs for its aid implementation in conflict-affected areas, as NGOs possess a good reputation in many circles for their humanitarian activities.

2) Stronger cooperation with local governments by NGOs: One of the reasons that NGOs lose their independence is their heavy reliance on central governments for financial assistance and credibility. In order to maintain a high level of operational autonomy, NGOs need to establish stronger collaborative relationships with *Jichitai* (local governments).

Jichitai tend to exercise strong influence over the central government on domestic issues. Strong-minded leaders have clear wills in local politics and more importantly, their positions allow them official access to the central decision-making process. This is what NGOs have been struggling to obtain because the so-called “Iron Triangle” type of authority has hindered their ability to access the official process. *Jichitai* have their own international cooperation strategies so through cooperation with them, NGOs can put pressure on the government to create favourable aid policies.⁴ The potential limitation of this strategy is that a local body has its own interests, so the desires of NGOs must meet these interests. For instance, environmental conservation is a major interest for both sides but sustainable development is a concern primarily of the NGOs’ side. That

⁴ Most prefectures have international cooperation divisions at their local governments. Some powerful local governments, such as Tokyo, Osaka, Mie and Kanagawa, have been pursuing international policies beyond cultural exchange through having sister cities.

is because environmental issues can be considered at both the local and global levels, but sustainable development is discussed mainly at an international level that local governments consider far outside their own ambit of concern. Considering this issue, JVC has been trying to link *Jichitai* and a Thai rural village in “the local market project”. The aim of this project was to support a morning market for trade among villagers in order to create a direct link between producers and consumers, and thus develop a market economy within villages.⁵ Japanese villages’ morning markets are thought to be an ideal style by some local governments and that has started exchange relationships at local levels.

3) Personnel Exchange: A lack of understanding between aid administrators and NGO staff often retards cooperation. It would be of great benefit to exchange personnel between governmental agencies and NGOs in order to build mutual confidence. This would be especially between NGOs and aid implementing bodies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), the Ministry of Finance (MOF), the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). This idea is already being trialled between governmental ministries such as the MOFA and the National Police Agency for their work on international criminal cases.

There are two immediate problems with extending this exchange programme to include government-NGO exchanges. The first of them is the extremely sensitive issue of salary which under the existing government exchange scheme, is not a crucial problem because they are paid by governmental agencies anyway. Japanese bureaucrats are guaranteed a stable income for the length of their careers. However, if they were to transfer to an NGO, who pays their salaries would be problematic since an NGO job is

⁵ Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC), Activities Guideline, (Tokyo: JVC, 2002), 10.

not a high-paying one in Japan. If transferred bureaucrats were to be paid by the NGO, they would face a crucial pay cut, which would be against their original contract with their home governmental agencies.

The issue of loyalty is also potentially problematic. Occasionally, retirees from governmental agencies have moved into private sectors including NGOs – which is called *Amakudari* – but they tend to be more focused on their loyalty to their home agencies than on advancing the work of their new employers. If the same were true of government-NGO exchange-personnel, it would certainly hinder the process of interchange.

Looking Forward...

This thesis has discussed Japanese NGOs and their role in official aid policy, their relationship with the central government, modes of operations, and future directions. The viewpoints of both the government and NGOs have been presented.

Although Japanese NGOs are now faced with the challenge of the government's intention to link ODA and the SDF, there is still a great demand for NGOs, especially in the provision of 'humanitarian' foreign aid. Under "Visible Japanese Aid" it was intended to utilise them to show Japan's 'friendly face' to the international community, but NGOs have become a major challenger to the rigidity of Japan's aid decision-making process, which has become more open and inclusive as a result of NGO efforts. Cooperating with NGOs in official aid strategies is without doubt a big task for the government. This is because it not only precipitates a potential challenge, but also requires the government to renounce vested rights such as a monopolised decision-making process which used to be of 'sweet linkages' between business industries. Even so, however, it brings a human 'face' to Japanese aid and dramatises it,

an outcome which the Japanese government strongly desired from the collaboration from the outset. Its aim was achieved along with a powerful challenger and ‘partner’.

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Interviews

There are a number of people who contributed to this thesis by taking parts in interviews. The interviews have been done in informal circumstance and sometimes when the author was working with them. Because of the exclusive and secretive nature of Japanese Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and the Japanese society, there are some interviewees appeared in the thesis who hoped not to be identified for their comments. They are called ‘anonymous’ in the thesis.

Professor Hiroyasu Iwasaki, Professor of University of Tedukayama Gakuin, in Kyoto, on:
15 May 2003.

Ms. Liz Makintyer, Voluntary Agencies Support Scheme (VASS), in Palmerston North, on:
3 December 2002.

Mr. Kiyotaka Takahashi, Policy Advocacy Staff, Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC), in Tokyo, on:
22 April 2003,
13 May 2003,
26 November 2004.

Ms. Maki Hasegawa, Project Manager, The Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA) Japan, in Tokyo, on:
15 May 2003.

Mr. Hideaki Ishii, Policy Advocacy staff, Peace Winds Japan, in Tokyo, on:

15 October 2002.

Ms. Yoko Takahashi, Diplomat, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan (MOFA) Official, in

Wellington, on:

17 August 2002 (anonymous source).

Mr. Michiya Kumaoka, Director, JVC, in Tokyo, on:

17 June 2003,

24 June 2003,

30 June 2003.

Dr. Mikio Oishi, former Malaysian NGO staff, in Christchurch, on:

15 October 2002.

Mr. Yasuhiro Kitagawa, Director, Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JCBL) Director, in

Tokyo, on:

9 June 2003,

12 July 2003,

25 September 2003.

Ms. Masako Maekawa, Secretary, JCBL, in Tokyo, on:

12 July 2003.

Ms. Ikuko Matsumoto, Programme Director of Development Finance and Environment,

Friends of the Earth (FoE) Japan, in Tokyo, on:

23 January 2004.

Ms. Yasuko Matsumoto, former Japanese Campaigner, Greenpeace Japan, in Tsukuba, on:

20 January 2004.

Ms. Mitsuko Tomiyasu, Donation Coordinator, JVC, in Tokyo, on:

19 May 2003.

Mr. Kazuhito Suga, General Affairs staff, JVC, in Tokyo, on:

12 May 2003.

Ms. Yoko Ogino, Public Relations staff, JVC, in Tokyo, on:

12 May 2003.

Ms. Ikuko Nakayama, Membership and Development Education staff, JVC, in Tokyo, on:

26 May 2003.

Ms. Satoko Hirose, Annual Calendar staff, JVC, in Tokyo, on:

26 May 2003.

Ms. Tomoko Ishikawa, Annual Christmas Concert staff, JVC, in Tokyo, on:

2 June 2003.

Mr. Hideaki Kurakawa, Thailand Project staff, JVC, in Tokyo, on:

9 June 2003.

Ms. Mari Suauki, Cambodia Project staff, JVC, in Tokyo, on:

9 June 2003.

Ms. Mina Ochi, Lao and Vietnam Project staff, JVC, in Tokyo, on:

16 June 2003.

Ms. Sumiko Teranishi, North Korea Project staff, JVC, in Tokyo, on:

16 June 2003.

Ms. Kyoko Harada, South Africa Project staff, JVC, in Tokyo, on:

23 June 2003.

Ms. Mayumi Hachisuka, Afghanistan Project staff, JVC, in Tokyo, on:

23 June 2003.

Mr. Kunio Iwama, Finance staff, JVC, in Tokyo, on:

30 June 2003.

Mr. Toshihiro Shimizu, Secretary, JVC, in Tokyo, on:

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Appendix 1

Description of Fieldwork

The First Fieldwork in Japan (March 2003 – June 2003)

I have undertaken the first fieldwork in Japan from March to June in 2003, working for two major Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Japan, Japan International Volunteer Center (JVC) and Japan Campaign to Ban Landmines (JBIC). I have also visited some other NGOs, which have their headquarters in Tokyo.

JVC is one of the largest and most influential development NGOs in Japan and I have worked as Policy Advocacy team intern. JCBL is specialised on anti-personnel landmines issue and I have worked as a temporary interpreter for the organisation.

While working for the two NGOs, I have interviewed staff and collected valuable data from them. The interviews were done in casual and relaxing atmosphere because I wanted them to talk openly. I was only taking a short note but not a formal record of the interviews because interviewees asked me not to, due to sensitiveness of topics. Many staff of JVC, JCBL and other NGOs kindly participated in the interviews although they were already overwhelmed with their huge amount of NGO works.

From the fieldwork, a large amount of data, which are extremely valuable and important, has been collected. The actual interview made it possible to obtain them because they are not usually disclosed to the public. In addition, the two NGOs have provided their primary resource continuously after the completion of fieldwork via phone, fax and email.

To carry out the intensive fieldwork, building mutual confidence between the NGOs was a major mission at first because they possess rather closed nature to outside, which is particular to Japanese society. Yet, I have succeeded in establishing a good relationship with them, and it has resulted in their strong support for this Ph.D. thesis to the end.

Other than these two main NGOs which I have worked for, I have visited and done some data collection and interviews taking advantage of being in Tokyo, where many NGOs have their headquarters. As well as materials from these NGOs, I have also collected governmental documents, some of which could not be retrieved from official sites of ministries and agencies such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC).

The Follow-Up Fieldwork (Second Fieldwork) in Japan (November 2004 – December 2004)

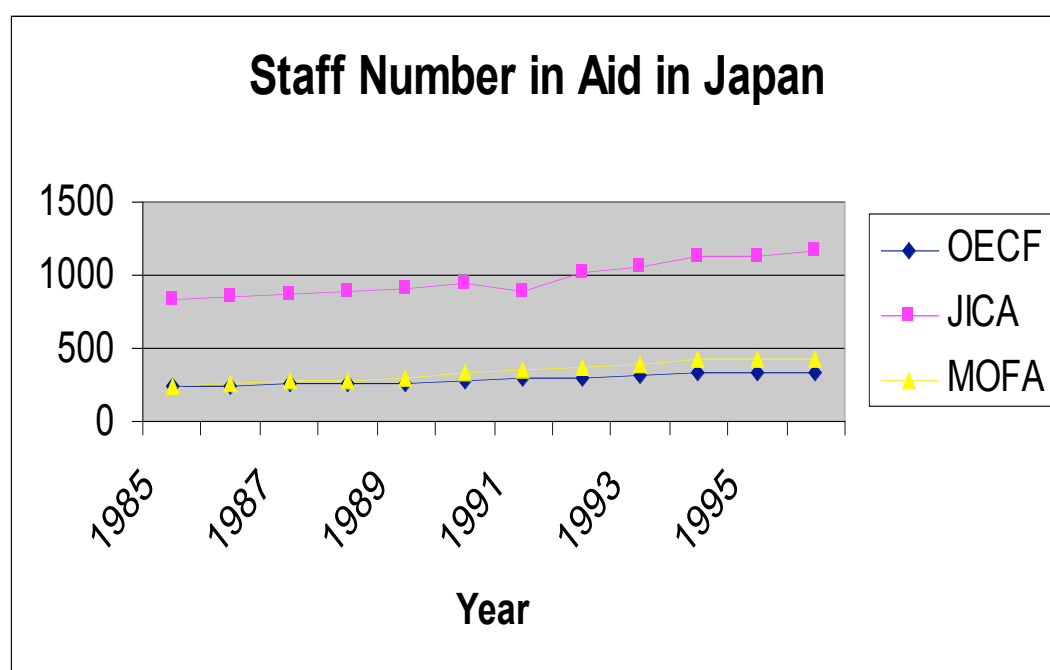
On the second fieldwork in Japan, I was employed as a fixed-term staff in Policy Advisory team of JVC and mainly worked on a topic of efficiency of foreign aid, which JVC was planning to host a symposium in early December 2004. Through working as a temporary staff, I have gone deeper in JVC's operational activities and obtained supplementary data

in addition to the first fieldwork.

Appendix 2 – Figures and Tables

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Appendix 2: Figure 1



(Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Japan's ODA 1997: 109)

Appendix 2: Table 1

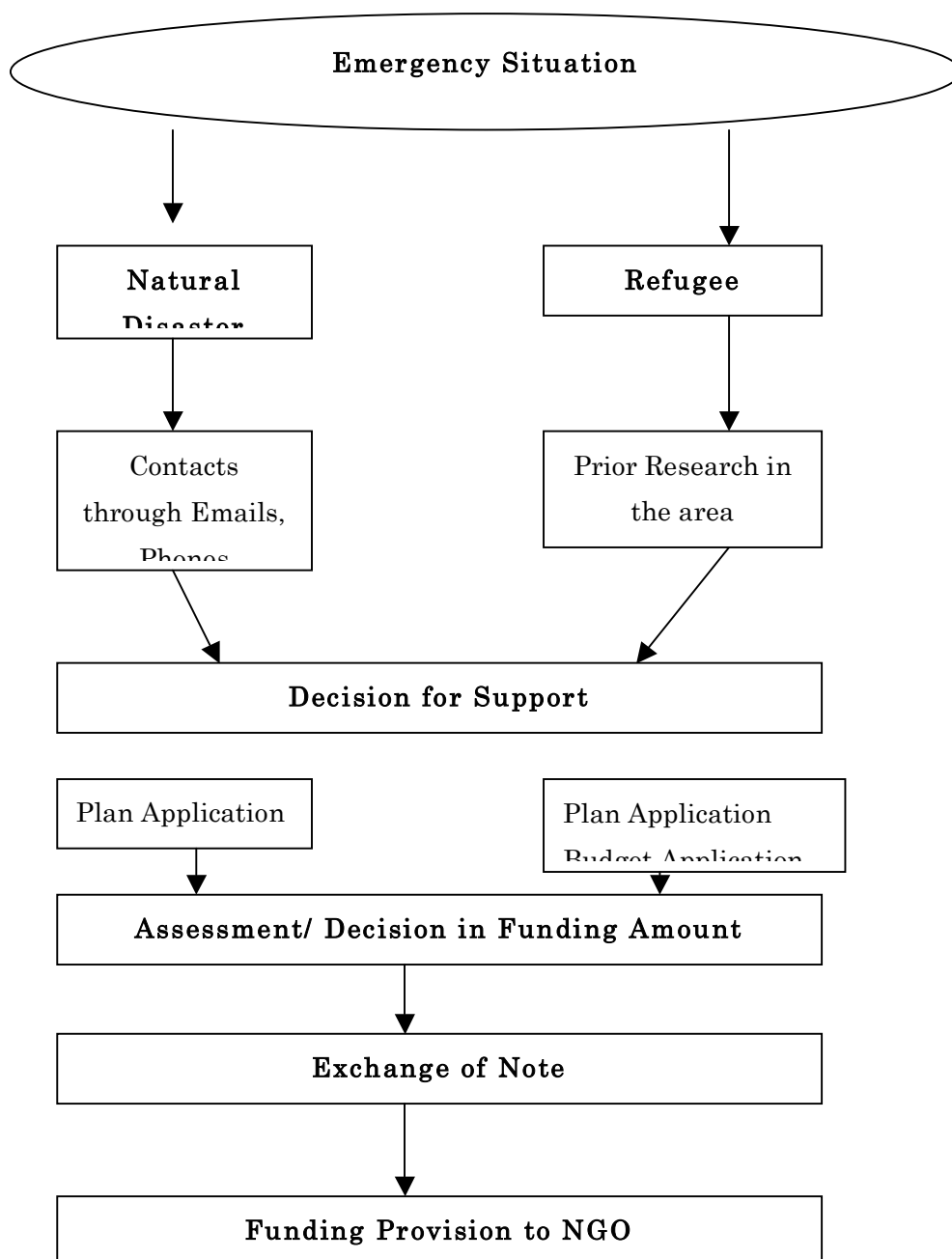
Comparison of Multiple and Single Aid Agency

	Multiple	Single
Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Each part of foreign aid policy is looked after specialised ministries and agencies. ➤ Responsibility is distributed among several entities so it reduces the pressure and stress if were a single body. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Clear responsibility of the agency. ➤ Unified budget that ease inter-ministry rivalry and produce flexibility over project scale. ➤ Stability of aid specialist staff.
Downsides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Confusion among applicants in where to apply for aid. ➤ Distributed responsibility over the aid policy lead to the fact that no one is in full charge. ➤ Frequent staff member change leads to insufficient number of aid specialists. ➤ Broadly-distributed aid budget leads to inter-ministry rivalry and could affect on efficiency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Possibility of strengthening the power of the agency and the parent ministry and it could lead to dictatorship in aid policy.

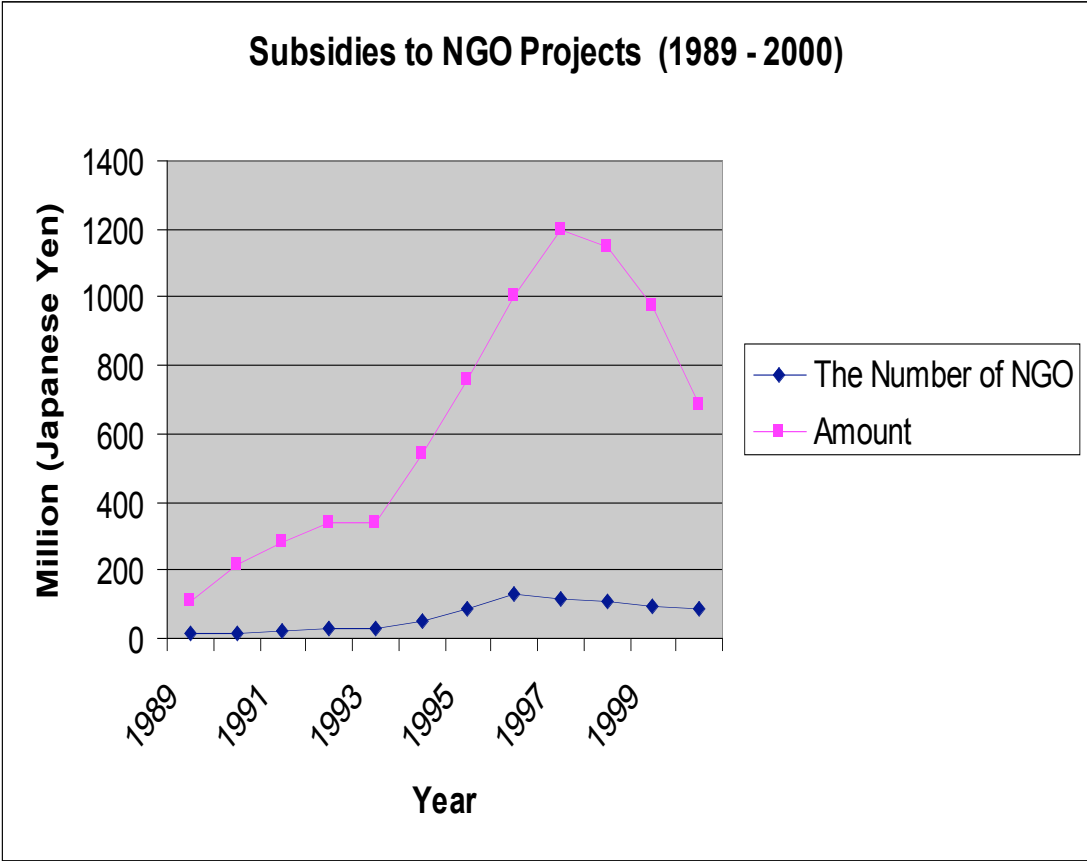
	of administration.	
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Source: Author)

Appendix 2 : Figure 2
Flow of Japan Platform



Appendix 2: Figure 3



(Source: Ministry

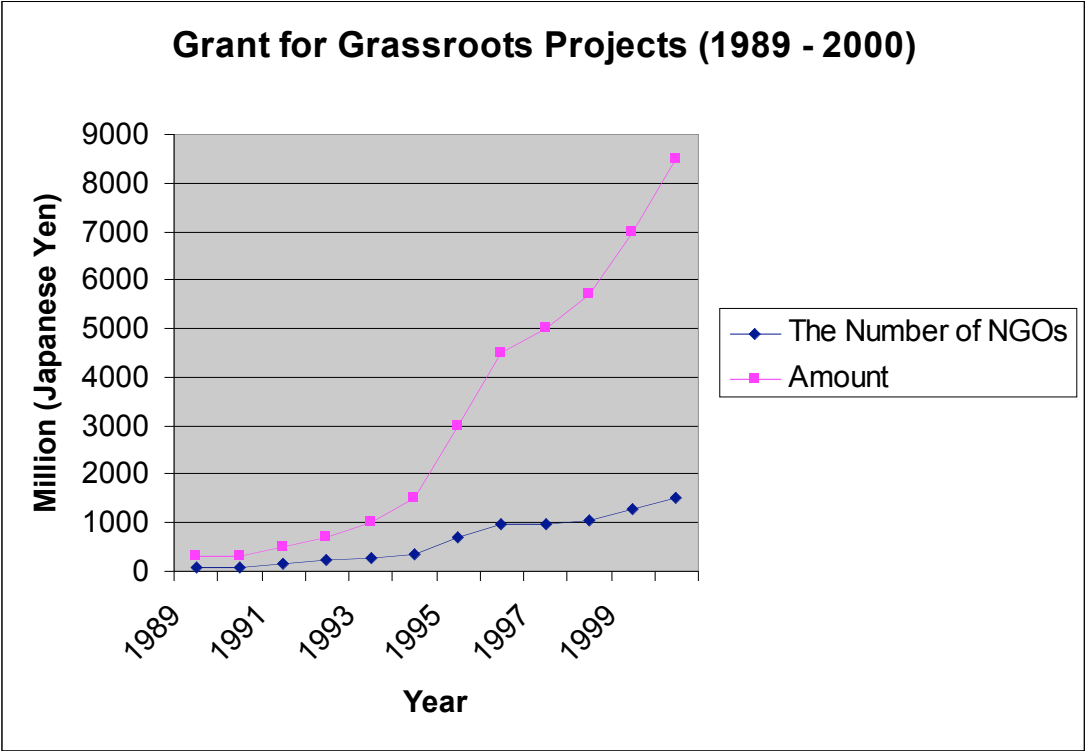
of Foreign Affairs of Japan)

Appendix 2: Table 2 Staff Number of Development NGOs in Japan

ADRA Japan	4
Association for Aid and Relief (AAR)	18
Care Japan	7
Caritus Japan	3
The Institute of Cultural Affairs in Japan (ICA)	7
Interband	5
Japan International Volunteer Centre (JVC)	40
World Vision Japan	32
Name of NGO in other area	
The Japanese Red Cross Society (education)	53,879
Peace Winds Japan	290

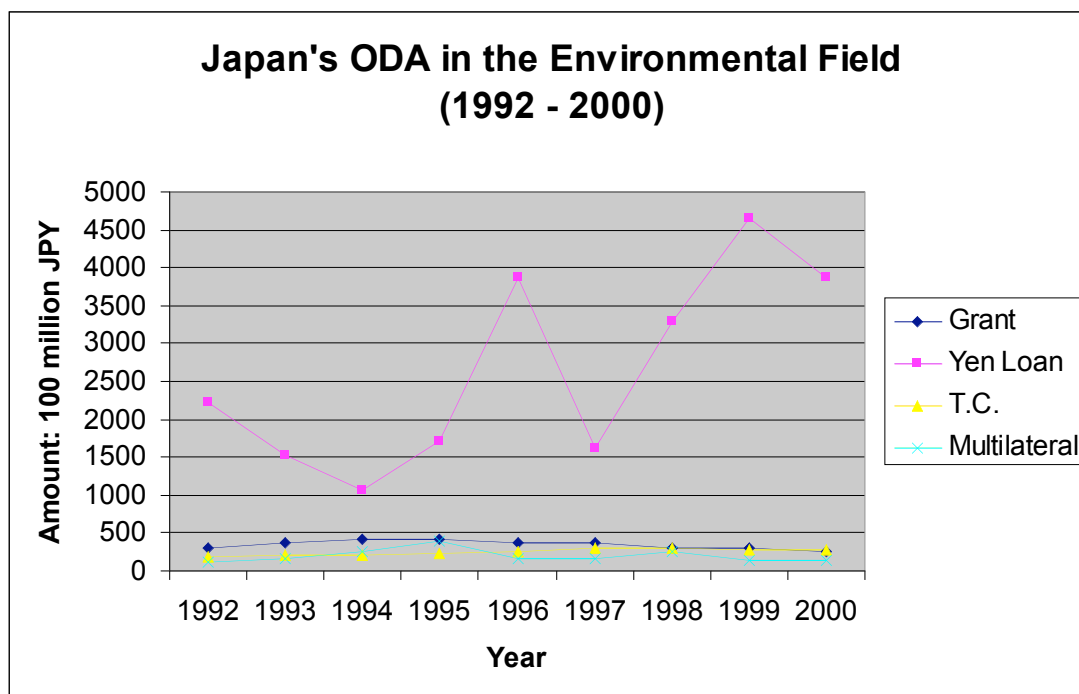
Source: Asia Pacific Resource Centre (Japan) (2003)

Appendix 2: Figure 4



(Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan)

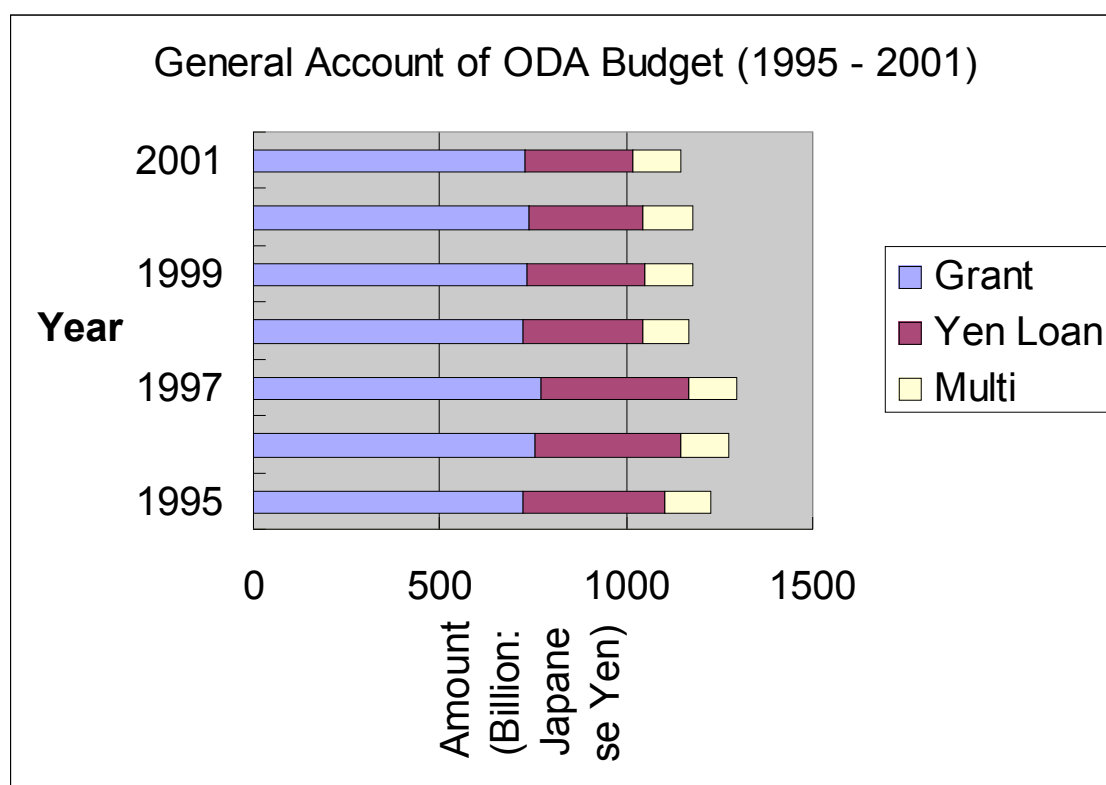
Appendix 2: Figure 5



(Source: MOFA,

Japan's ODA [Tokyo: APIC])

Appendix 2: Figure 6



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Japan's ODA 1995 – 2001)